THE BEST OF HEAVY METAL®

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FIFTEEN WORKS OF ART BY THE WORLD'S PREMIER SF AND FANTASY ARTISTS.

THE BEST OF HEAVY METAL #2

Compiled by the staff of *Heavy Metal* Magazine

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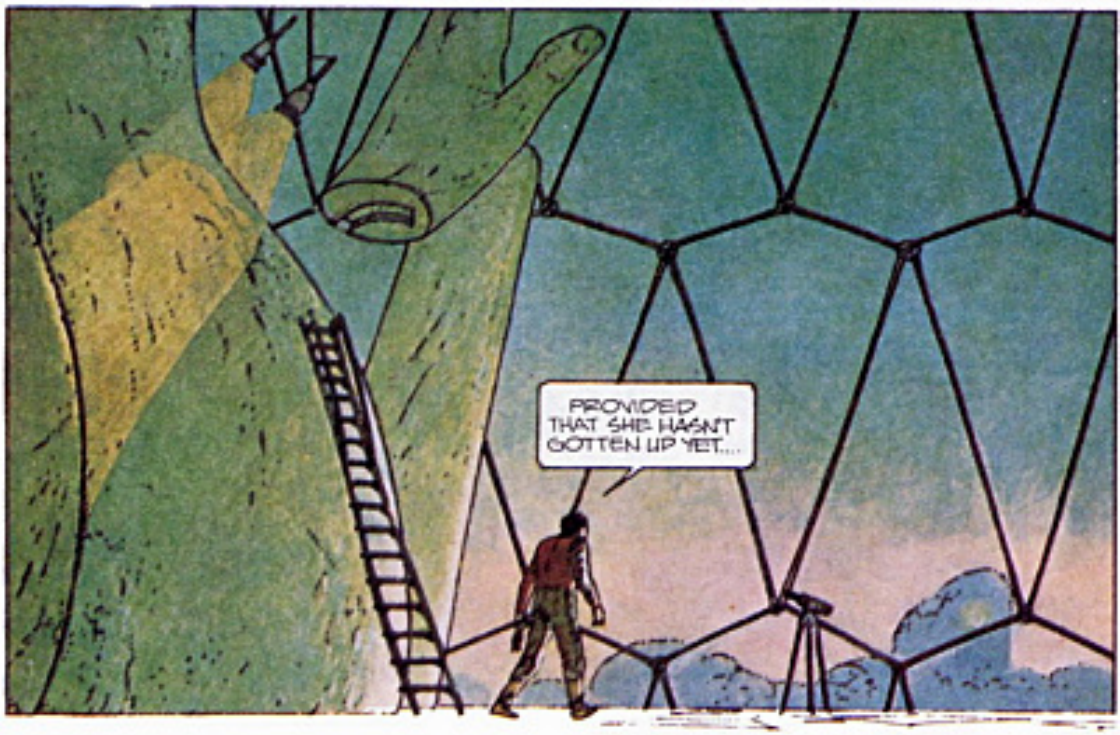
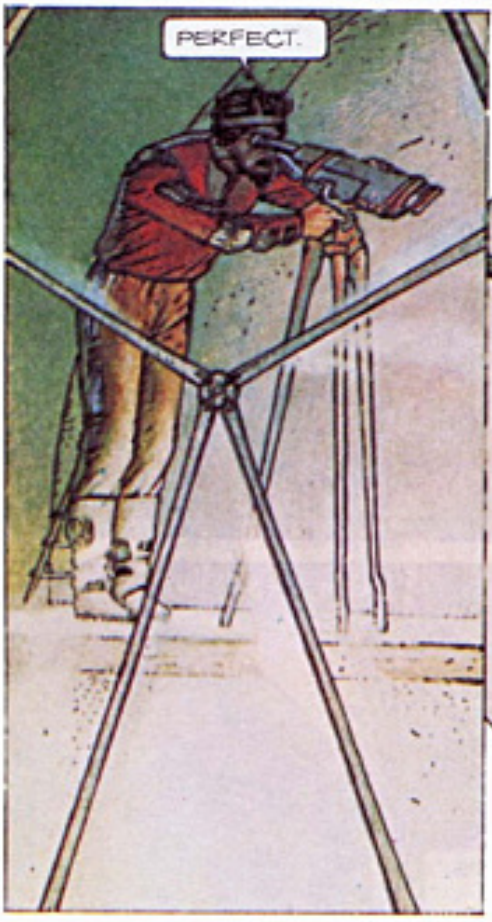
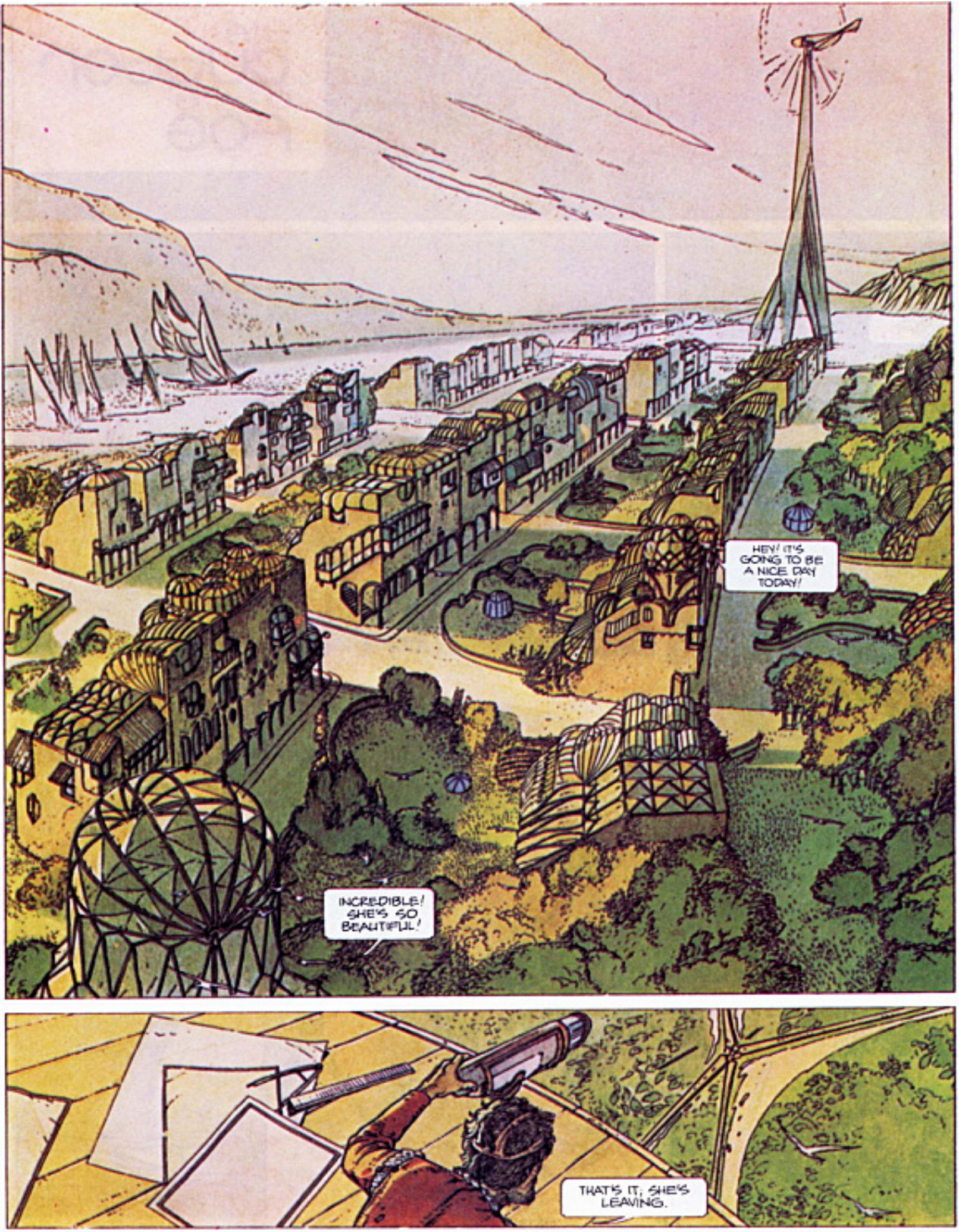
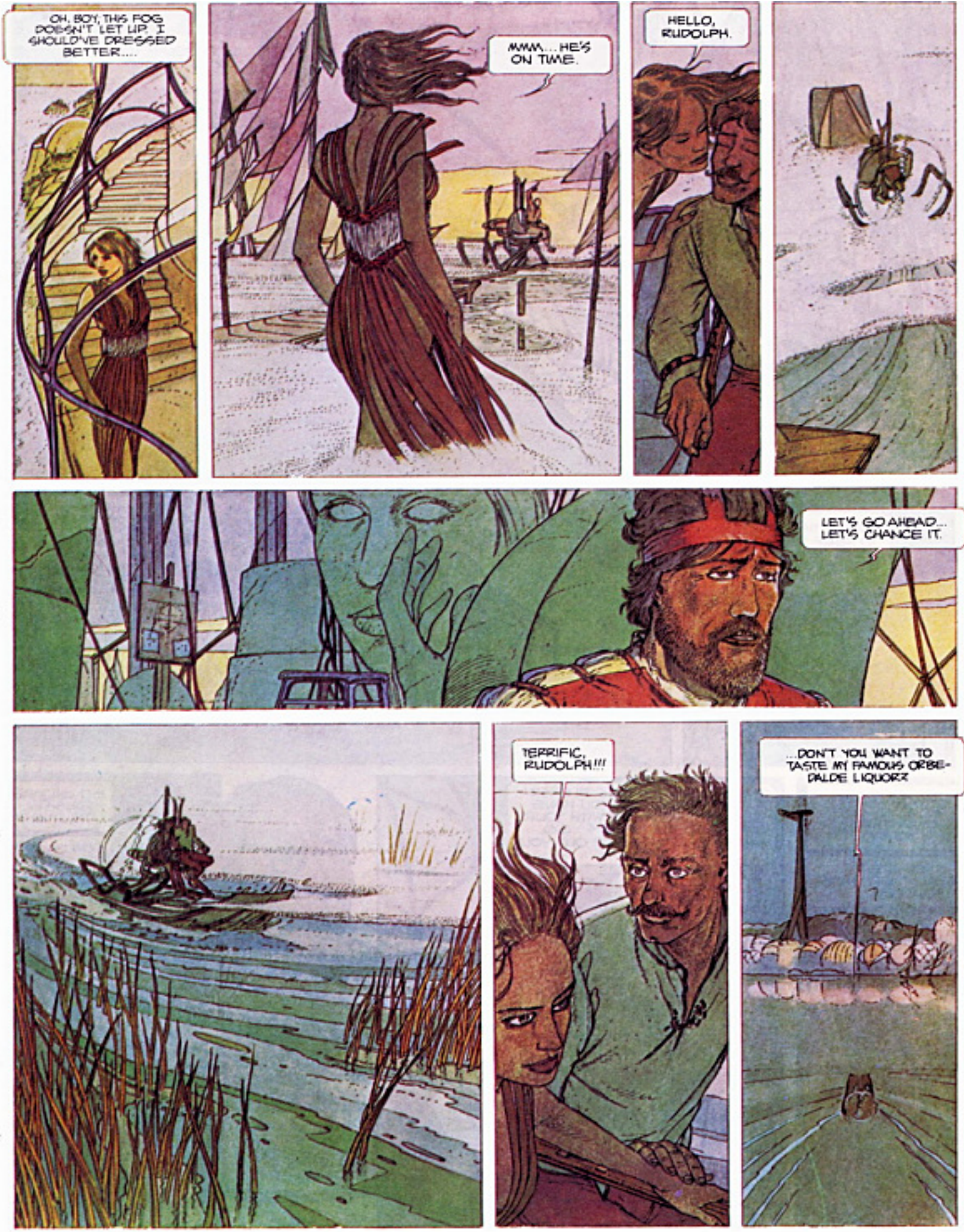
the
CUTTER
of the
FOG

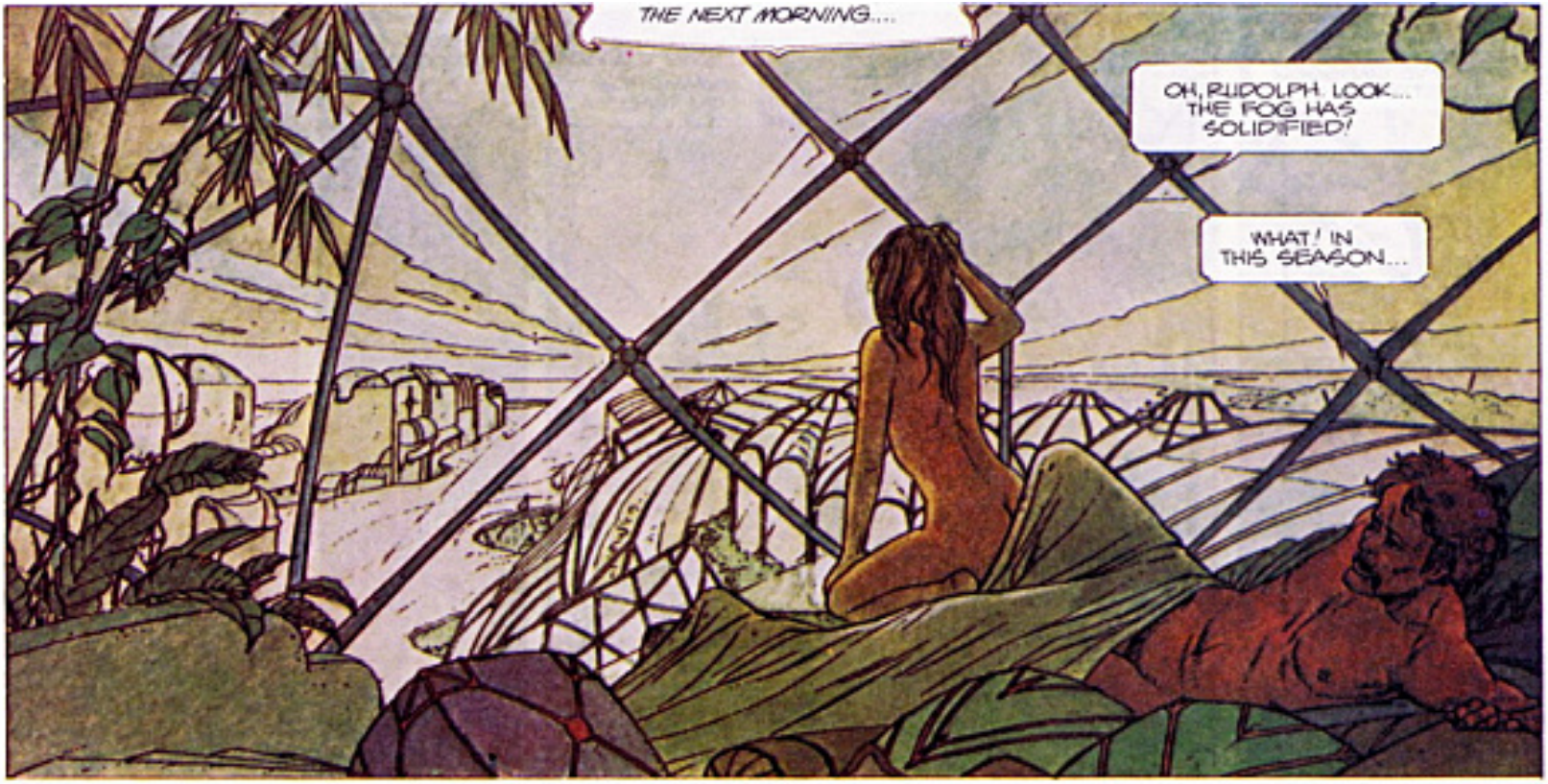
FINISHED FOR TODAY.


PROVIDED THAT SHE HASN'T GOTTEN UP YET....

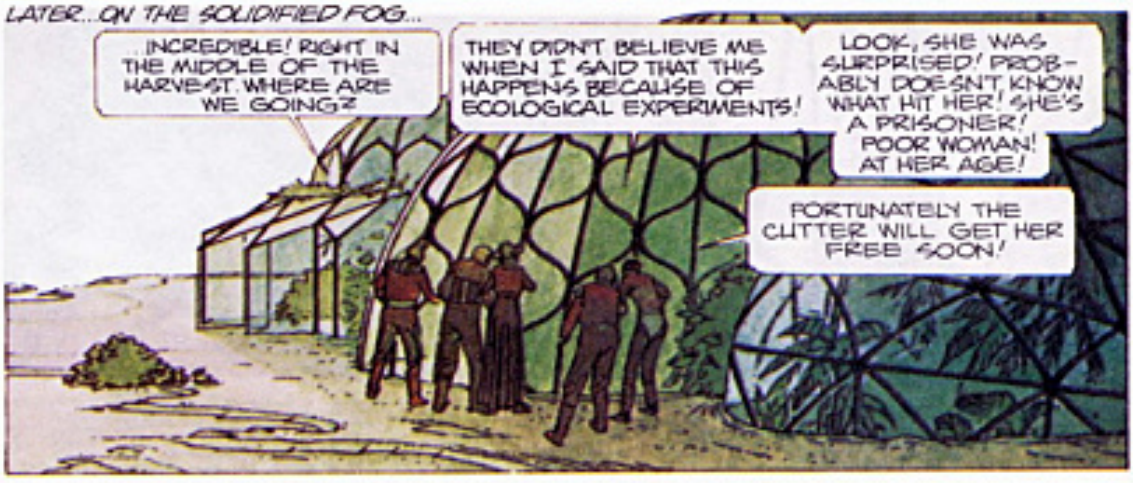

PERFECT.


HEY! IT'S GOING TO BE A NICE DAY TODAY!
INCREDIBLE! SHE'S SO BEAUTIFUL!
THAT'S IT, SHE'S LEAVING.


OH, BOY, THIS FOG DOESN'T LET UP. I SHOULD'VE DRESSED BETTER....
MMM... HE'S ON TIME.
HELLO, RUDOLPH.
LET'S GO AHEAD... LET'S CHANCE IT.
TERRIFIC, RUDOLPH!!!
...DON'T YOU WANT TO TASTE MY FAMOUS ORBE-DALDE LIQUOR?


THE NEXT MORNING....
OH, RUDOLPH, LOOK... THE FOG HAS SOLIDIFIED!
WHAT! IN THIS SEASON...

WELL... THAT'S GOING TO KEEP YOUR CUTTER BUSY. HE'LL LEAVE YOU ALONE FOR A WHILE....


LATER... ON THE SOLIDIFIED FOG...
...INCREDIBLE! RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE HARVEST. WHERE ARE WE GOING?
THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAID THAT THIS HAPPENS BECAUSE OF ECOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS!
LOOK, SHE WAS SURPRISED! PROBABLY DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HIT HER! SHE'S A PRISONER! POOR WOMAN! AT HER AGE!
FORTUNATELY THE CUTTER WILL GET HER FREE SOON!

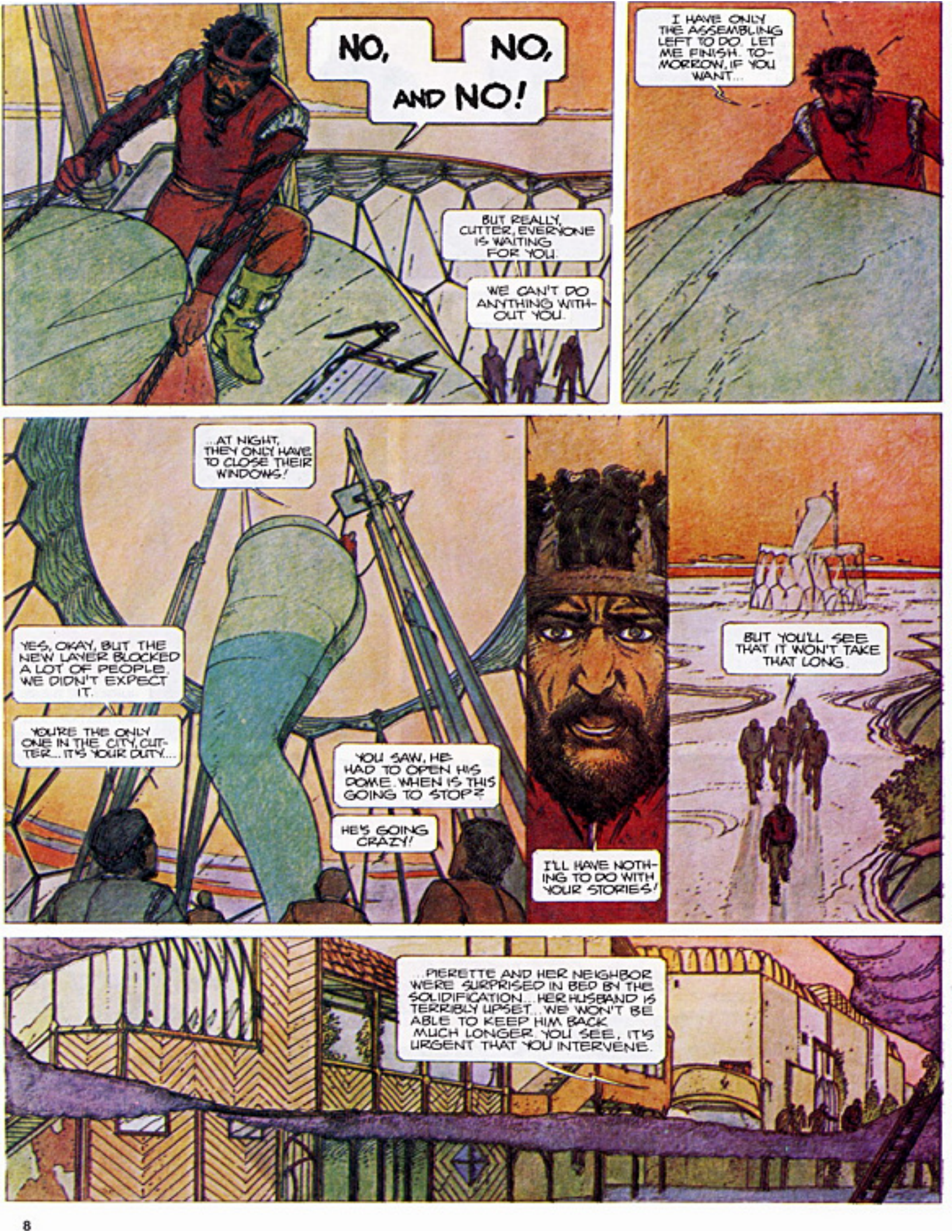
NOW, DON'T MOVE. I HAVE ONLY THAT TO DO....
YOU ARE REALLY VERY NICE, CUTTER!

ONE THOUSAND RUBLES, PLEASE! BUT WHY DO ALL OF YOU HAVE TO SLEEP AT NIGHT WITH YOUR GLASS HOUSES OPEN?... GO AHEAD! YOU CAN TAKE OUT YOUR ARMS NOW....
WHAT A CHARACTER THIS ONE HAS!

AH, LA, LA! WE HAVEN'T SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS SINCE THE SOLIDIFICATION OF 013

GO ON, MRS. TOUSSIN, IT'S OVER!
NOW, ON TO THE NEXT ONE

CUTTER, YOU WON'T FORGET TO COME LOOSEN A FEW CHAIRS... I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO SIT ON NOW....
MMM, YEAH. WE'LL SEE. WE'LL SEE...
WELL, WHO'S THERE?
HEY, CUTTER, IS IT BECAUSE YOU ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT MAN IN THE TOWN THAT YOU WON'T SAY HELLO TO ME? DON'T I INTEREST YOU ANYMORE?
BUT I... I....
WHEN WILL SHE STOP MAKING FUN OF PEOPLE?
HURRY UP! THERE ARE PEOPLE WAITING FOR YOU!
TWO DAYS LATER, A NEW LAYER OF FOG SETTLED AND SOLIDIFIED ON THE CITY....
GREAT GOD!


NO, NO, AND NO!
BUT REALLY, CUTTER, EVERYONE IS WAITING FOR YOU.
WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING WITHOUT YOU.
I HAVE ONLY THE ASSEMBLING LEFT TO DO. LET ME FINISH. TOMORROW, IF YOU WANT...
...AT NIGHT, THEY ONLY HAVE TO CLOSE THEIR WINDOWS!
YES, OKAY, BUT THE NEW LAYER BLOCKED A LOT OF PEOPLE. WE DIDN'T EXPECT IT.
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE IN THE CITY, CUTTER... IT'S YOUR DUTY...
YOU SAW, HE HAD TO OPEN HIS DOME. WHEN IS THIS GOING TO STOP?
HE'S GOING CRAZY!
I'LL HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH YOUR STORIES!
BUT YOU'LL SEE THAT IT WON'T TAKE THAT LONG.
...PIERETTE AND HER NEIGHBOR WERE SURPRISED IN BED BY THE SOLIDIFICATION... HER HUSBAND IS TERRIBLY UPSET... WE WON'T BE ABLE TO KEEP HIM BACK MUCH LONGER. YOU SEE, IT'S URGENT THAT YOU INTERVENE.

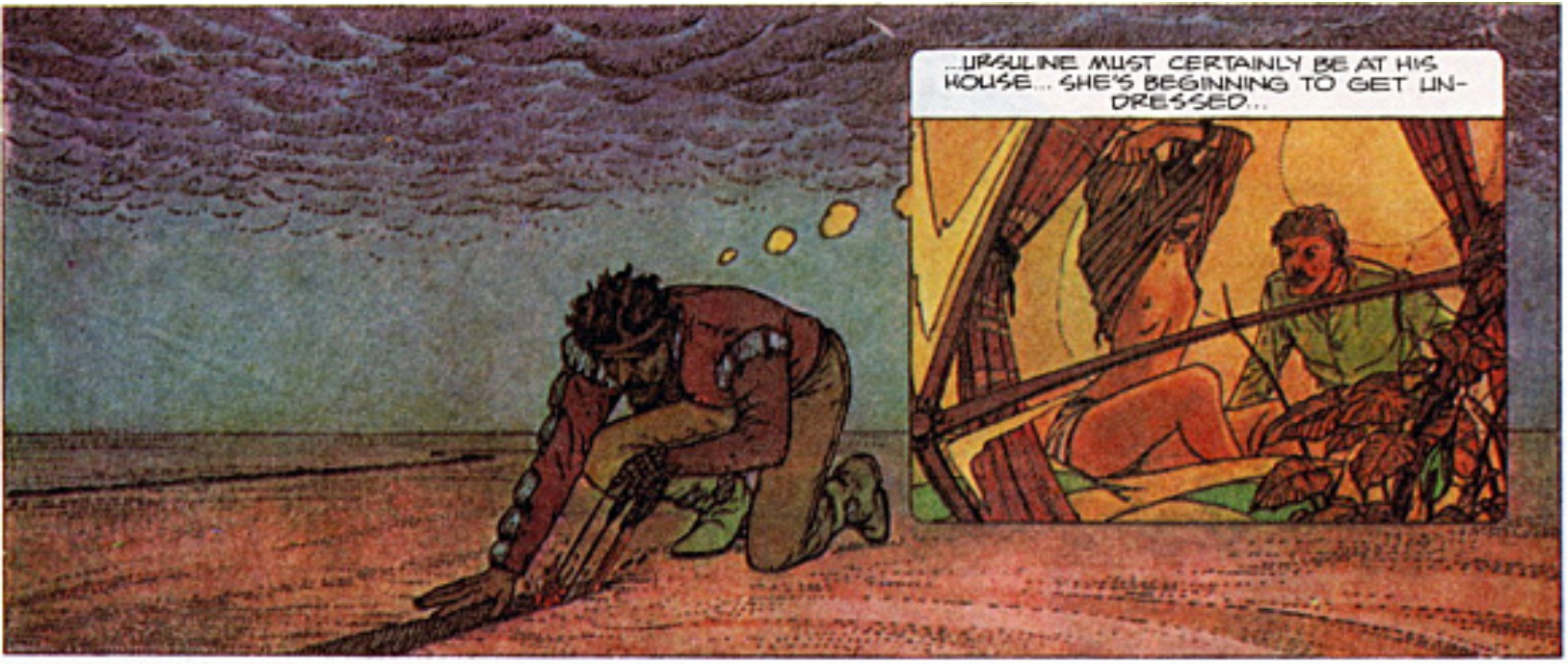
THAT'S IT. HE'S COMING. HE'S COMING.

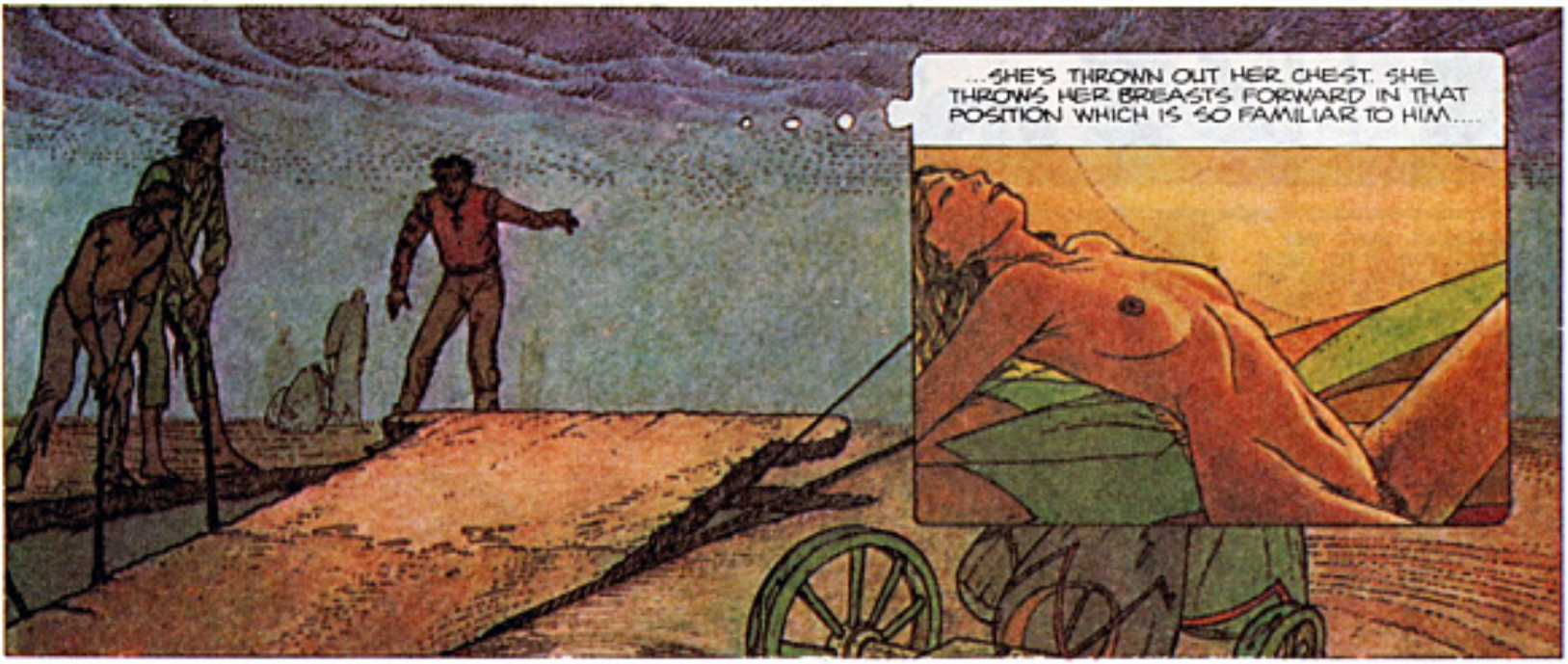
...AAH, THERE HE IS! IT'S NOT TOO EARLY, EITHER! HE'S CERTAINLY THE LAST ONE IN THE VILLAGE TO COME SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING.

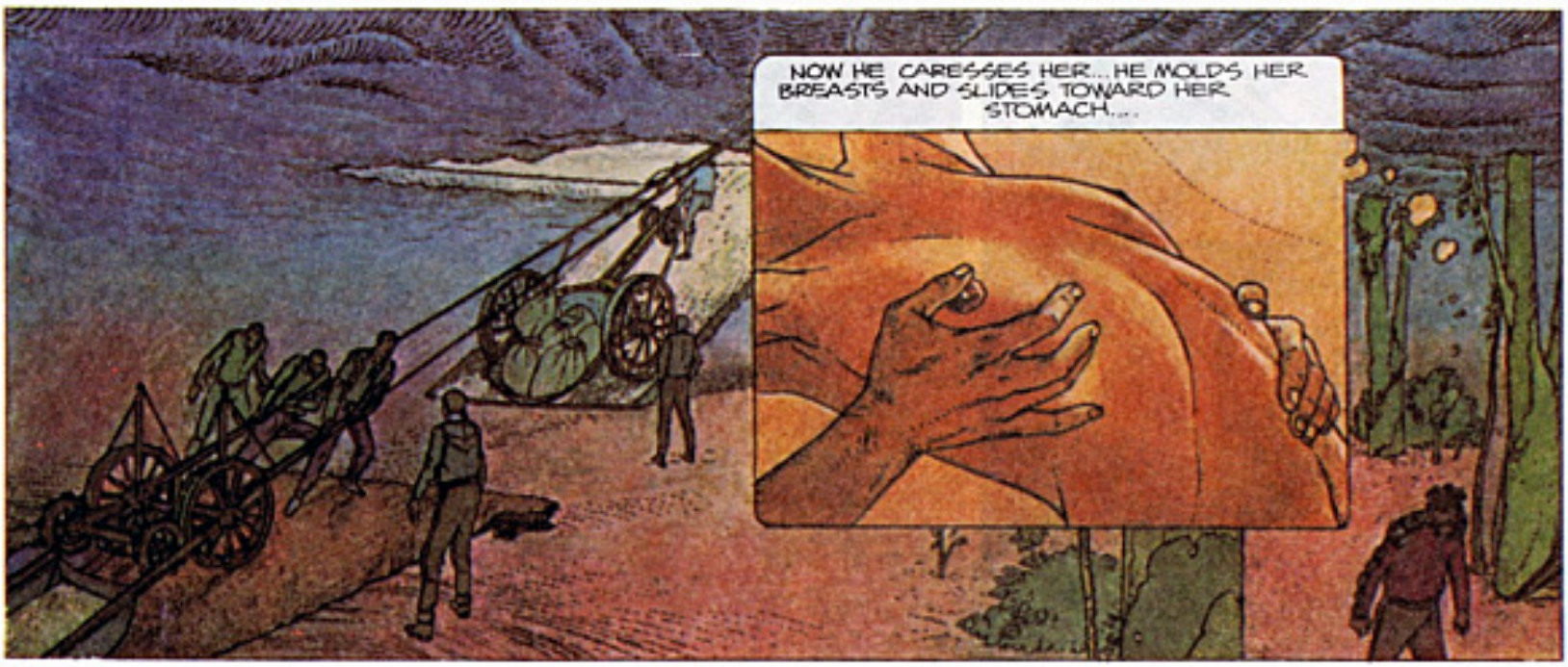
...REALLY CAN'T BE TOO CLEVER TO GET YOURSELVES INTO SITUATIONS LIKE THIS!
YOU KNOW, A SECOND LAYER IN THIS SEASON—IT'S NEVER HAPPENED LIKE THIS BEFORE....

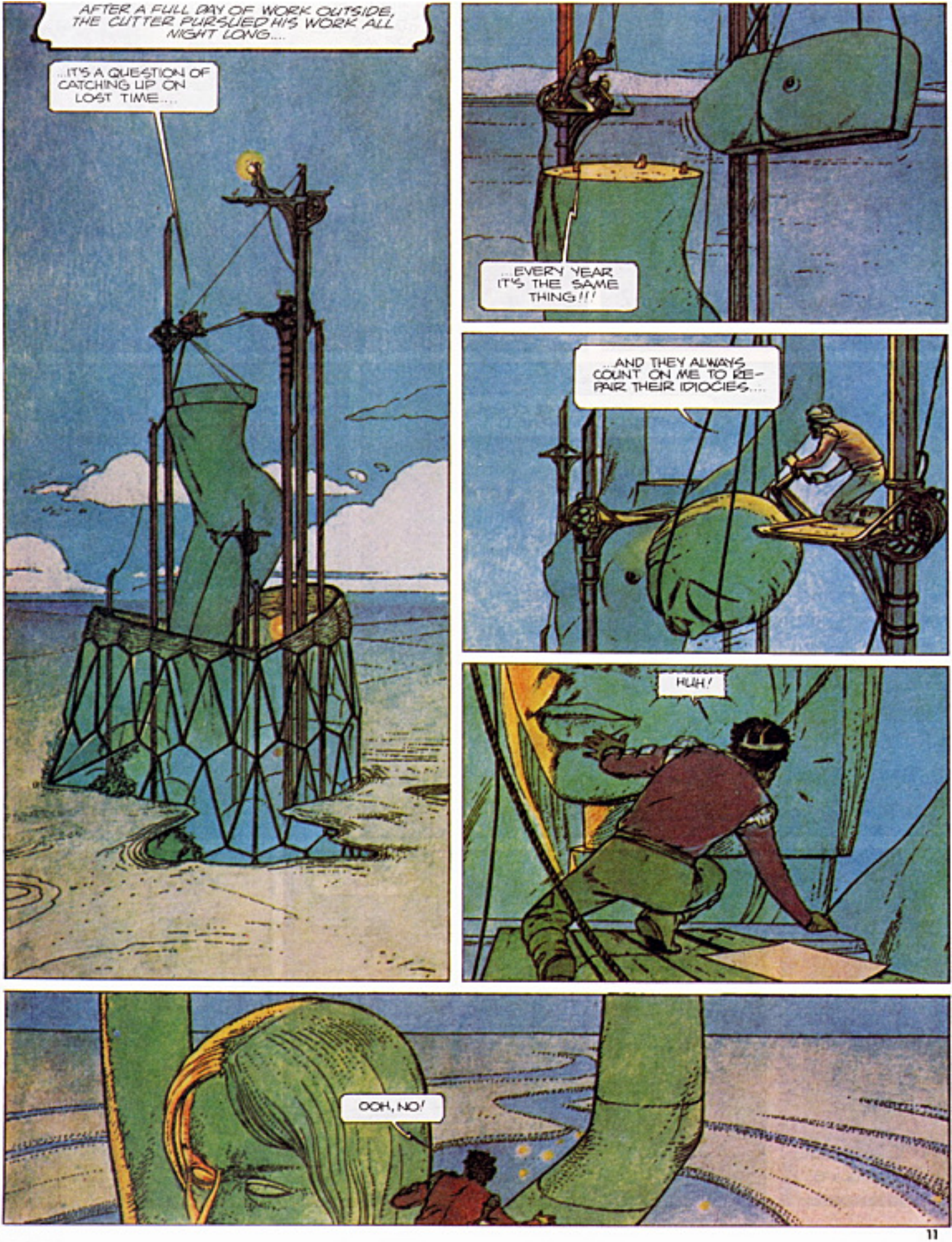
LATER
GOOD, I'M FINISHED EVERYONE IS FREE!

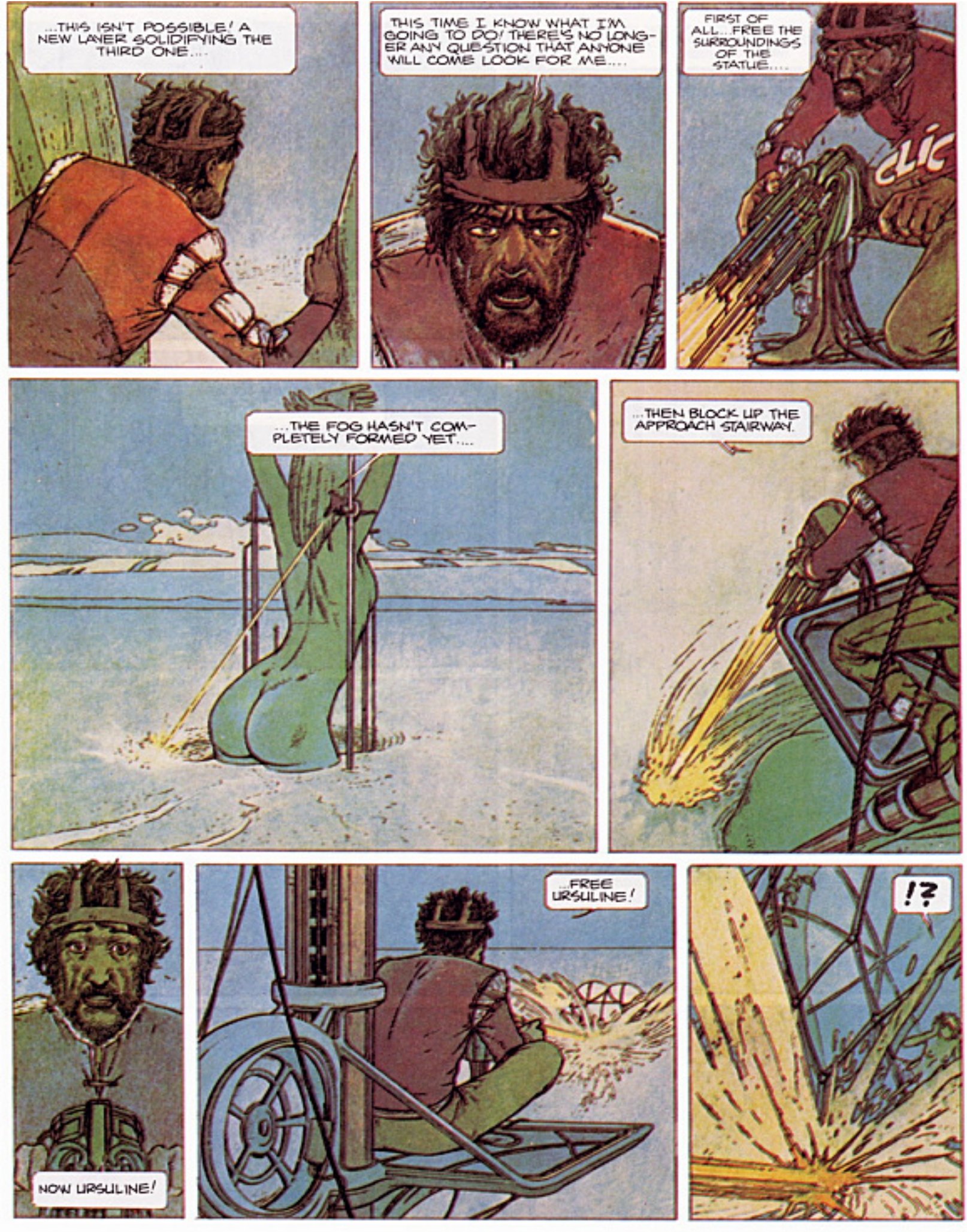
AAH, BUT ONE MINUTE: WE'VE GOT TO OPEN PASSAGES IN THE FOG IN ORDER TO BRING UP THE GRAIN...
YES, WE'VE GOT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE STRATIFICATION OF THE FOG IN ORDER FOR IT TO DRY. DON'T FORGET THE OLD ADAGE: "SOLIDIFICATION AT THE END OF THE HARVEST, DISSOLUTION BEFORE THE CELEBRATION OF..."

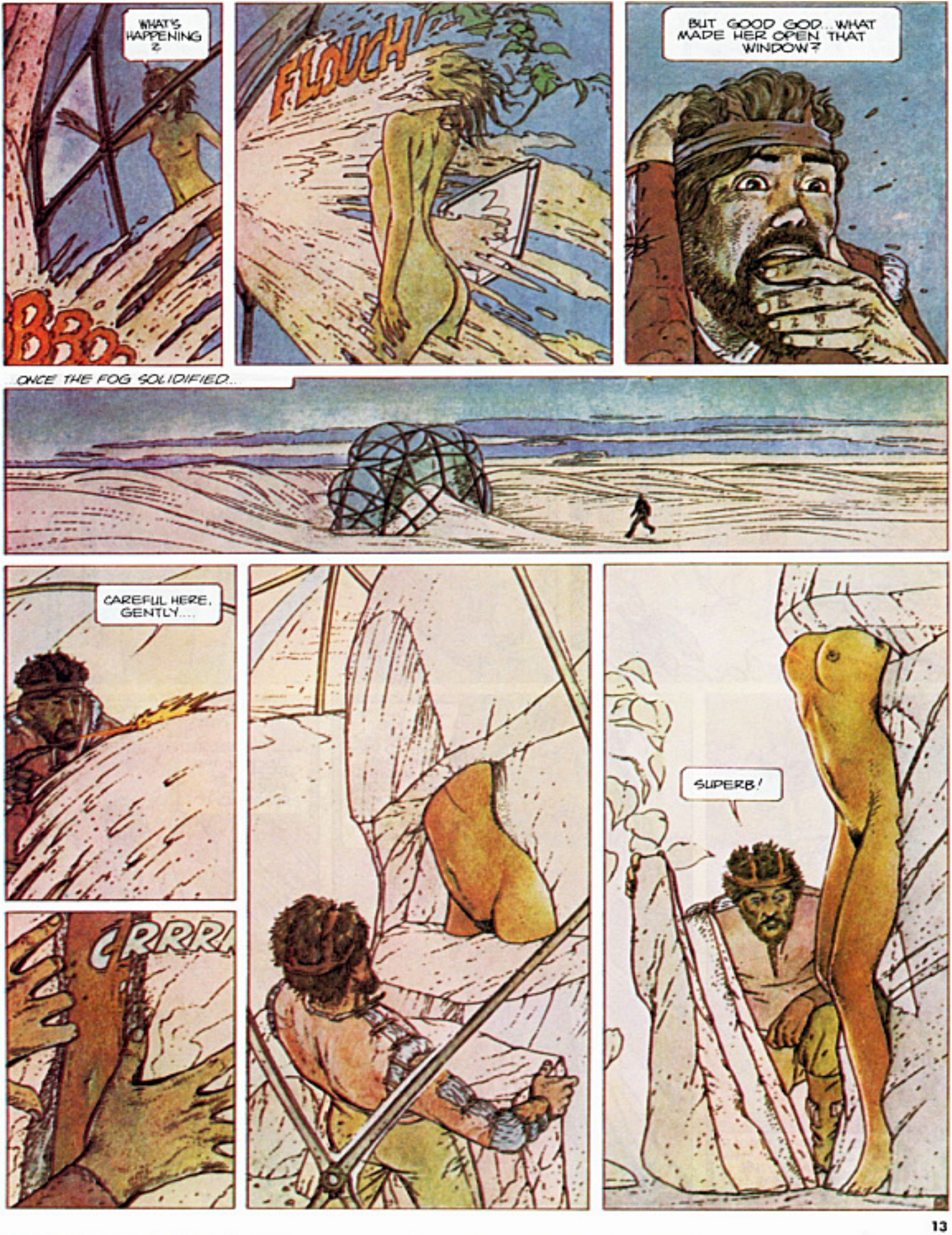

...URSULINE MUST CERTAINLY BE AT HIS HOUSE... SHE'S BEGINNING TO GET UNDRESSED...

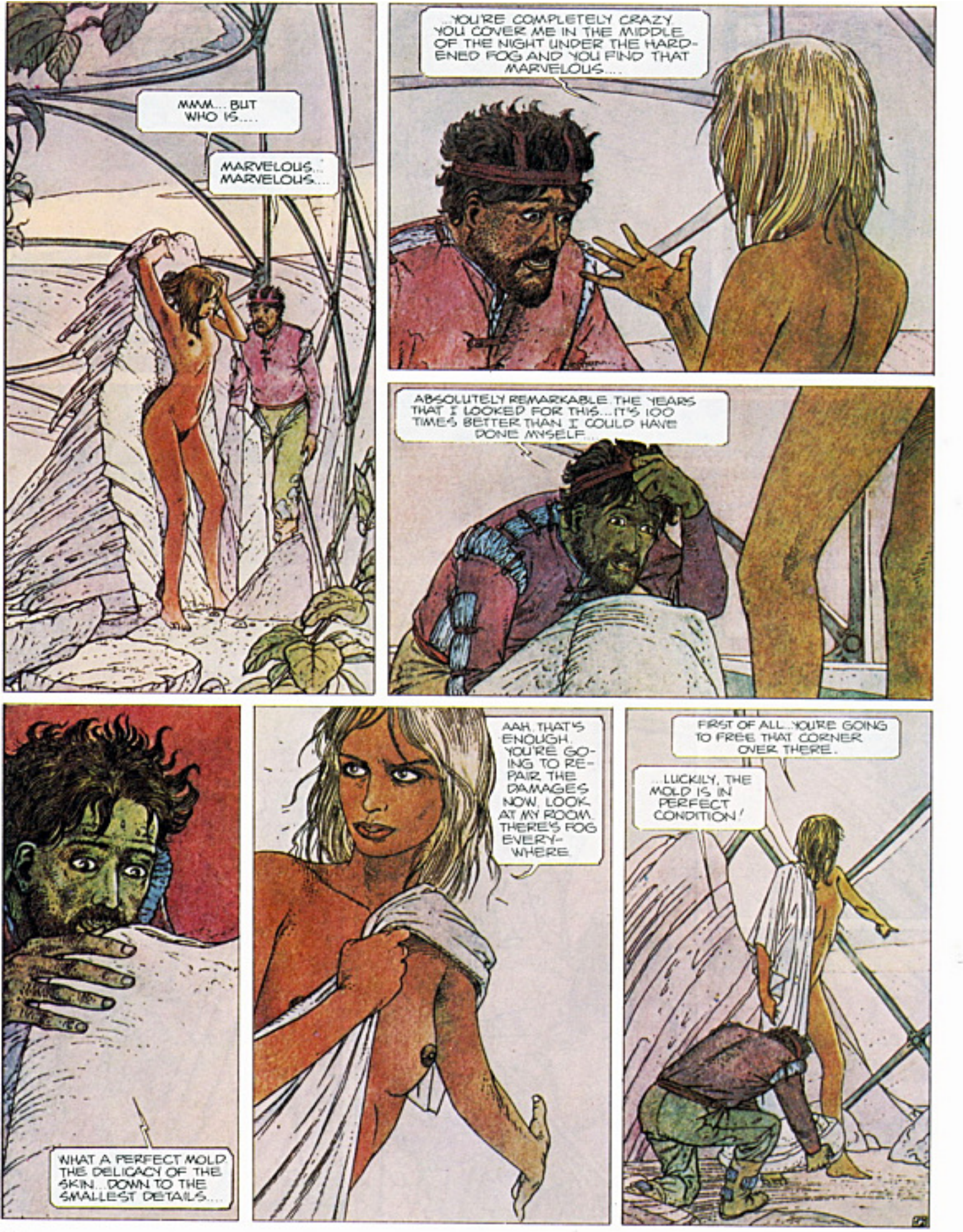

...SHE'S THROWN OUT HER CHEST. SHE THROWS HER BREASTS FORWARD IN THAT POSITION WHICH IS SO FAMILIAR TO HIM....

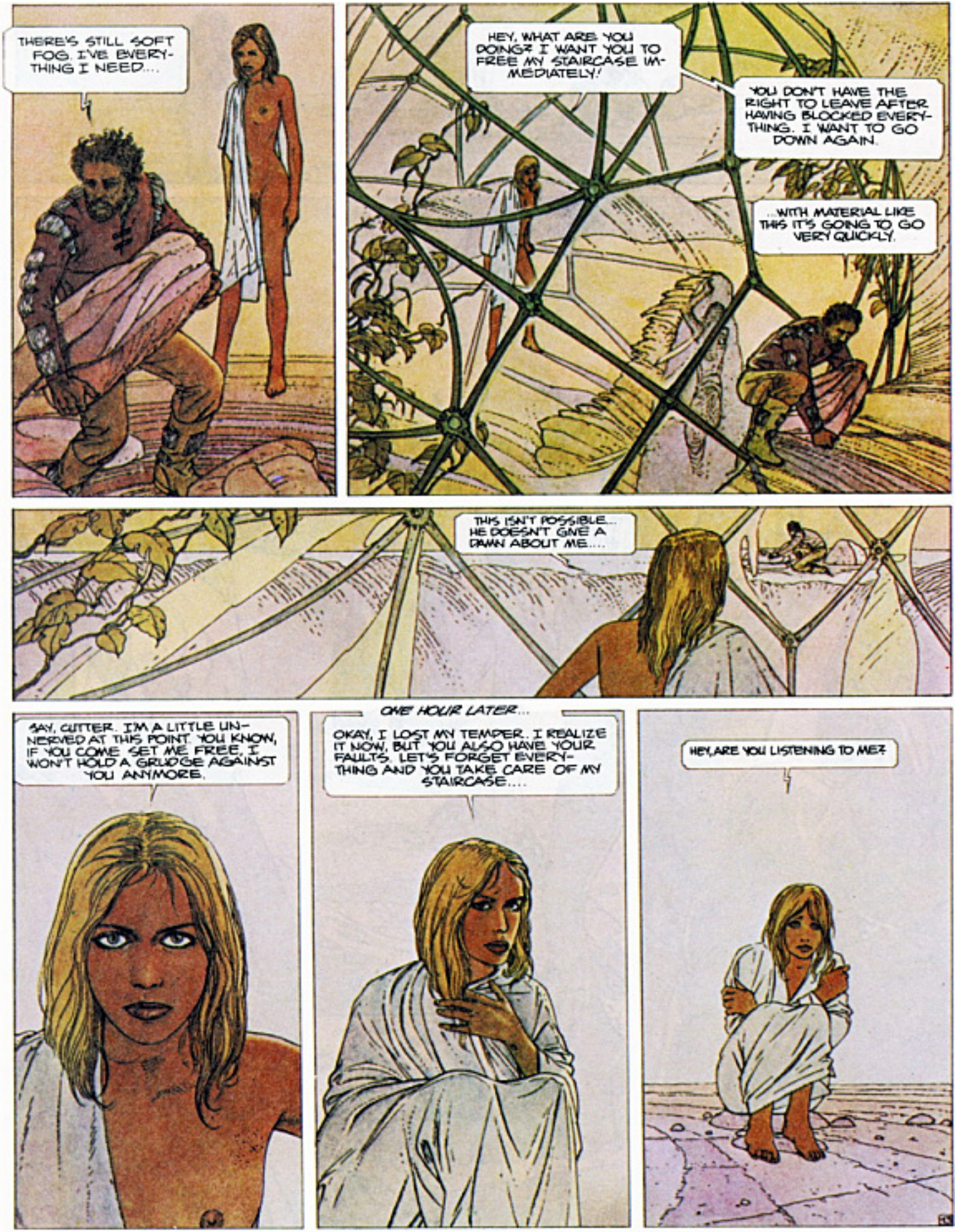

NOW HE CARESSES HER... HE MOLDS HER BREASTS AND SLIDES TOWARD HER STOMACH....


AFTER A FULL DAY OF WORK OUTSIDE, THE CUTTER PURSUED HIS WORK ALL NIGHT LONG....
...IT'S A QUESTION OF CATCHING UP ON LOST TIME....
...EVERY YEAR IT'S THE SAME THING!!!
...AND THEY ALWAYS COUNT ON ME TO REPAIR THEIR IDIOCIES....
HUH!
OOH, NO!

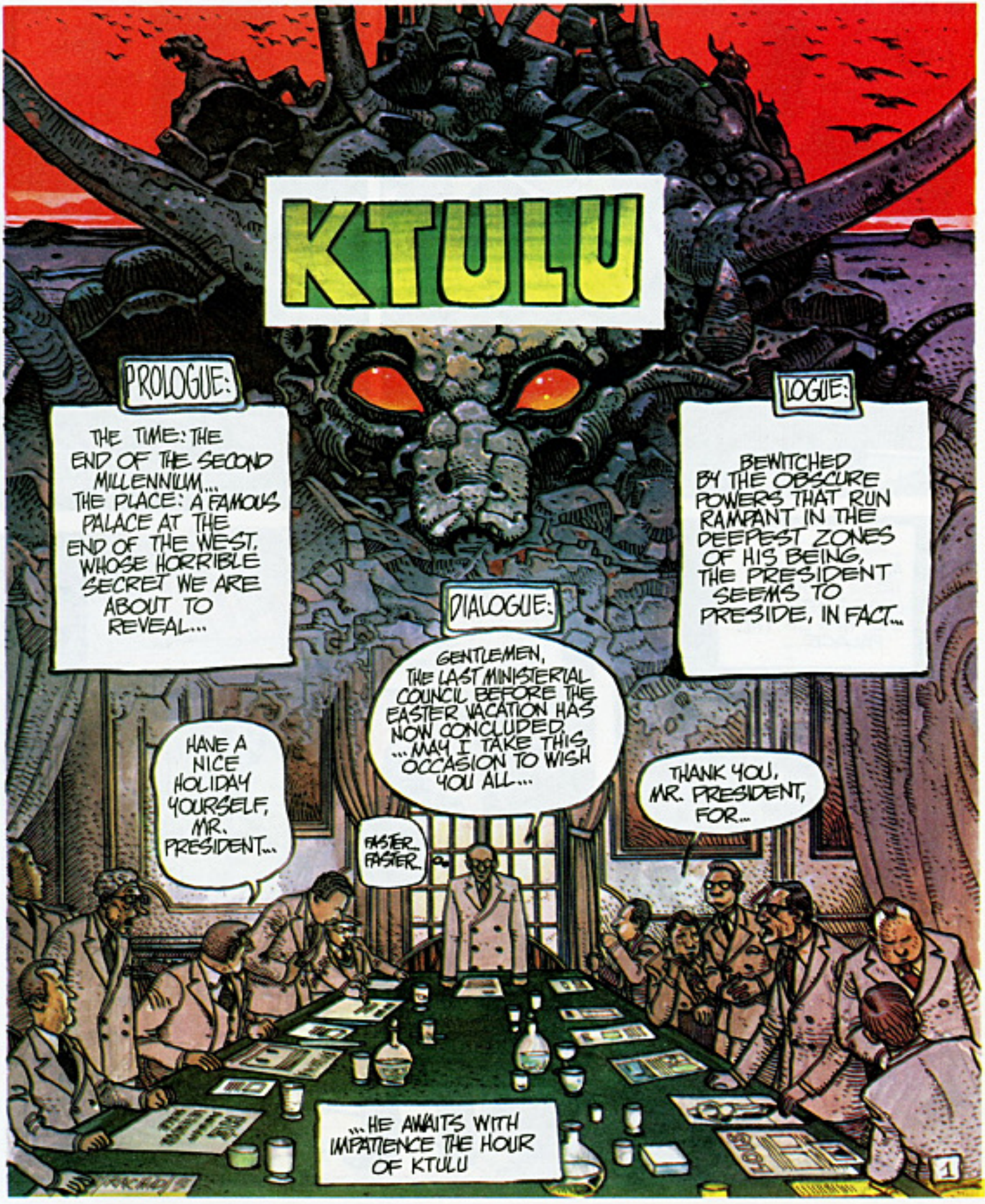

...THIS ISN'T POSSIBLE! A NEW LAYER SOLIDIFYING THE THIRD ONE....
THIS TIME I KNOW WHAT I'M GOING TO DO! THERE'S NO LONGER ANY QUESTION THAT ANYONE WILL COME LOOK FOR ME....
FIRST OF ALL... FREE THE SURROUNDINGS OF THE STATUE....
CLIC
...THE FOG HASN'T COMPLETELY FORMED YET....
...THEN BLOCK UP THE APPROACH STAIRWAY.
NOW URSULINE!
...FREE URSULINE!
!?


WHAT'S HAPPENING ?
BBB
FLOUCH
BUT GOOD GOD... WHAT MADE HER OPEN THAT WINDOW?
...ONCE THE FOG SOLIDIFIED...
CAREFUL HERE, GENTLY....
CRRRR
SUPERB!


MMM... BUT WHO IS....
MARVELOUS... MARVELOUS....
...YOU'RE COMPLETELY CRAZY YOU COVER ME IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT UNDER THE HARDENED FOG AND YOU FIND THAT MARVELOUS....
ABSOLUTELY REMARKABLE. THE YEARS THAT I LOOKED FOR THIS... IT'S 100 TIMES BETTER THAN I COULD HAVE DONE MYSELF....
WHAT A PERFECT MOLD THE DELICACY OF THE SKIN... DOWN TO THE SMALLEST DETAILS....
AAH, THAT'S ENOUGH. YOU'RE GOING TO REPAIR THE DAMAGES NOW. LOOK AT MY ROOM. THERE'S FOG EVERYWHERE.
FIRST OF ALL... YOU'RE GOING TO FREE THAT CORNER OVER THERE.
...LUCKILY, THE MOLD IS IN PERFECT CONDITION!

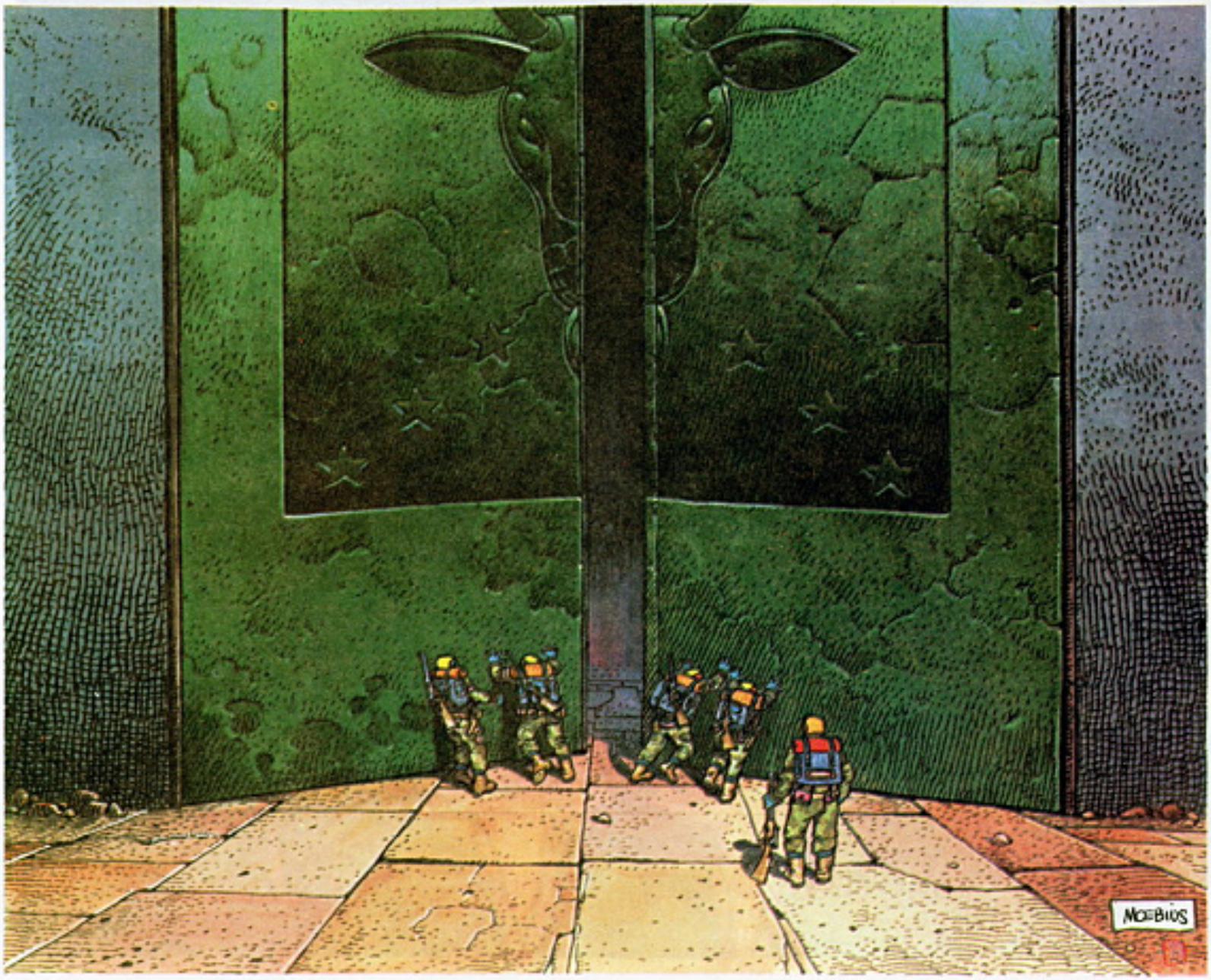

THERE'S STILL SOFT FOG. I'VE EVERYTHING I NEED....
HEY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? I WANT YOU TO FREE MY STAIRCASE IMMEDIATELY!
YOU DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO LEAVE AFTER HAVING BLOCKED EVERYTHING. I WANT TO GO DOWN AGAIN.
...WITH MATERIAL LIKE THIS IT'S GOING TO GO VERY QUICKLY.
THIS ISN'T POSSIBLE... HE DOESN'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT ME....
ONE HOUR LATER...
SAY, CUTTER. I'M A LITTLE UNNERVED AT THIS POINT. YOU KNOW, IF YOU COME SET ME FREE, I WON'T HOLD A GRUDGE AGAINST YOU ANYMORE.
OKAY, I LOST MY TEMPER. I REALIZE IT NOW, BUT YOU ALSO HAVE YOUR FAULTS. LET'S FORGET EVERYTHING AND YOU TAKE CARE OF MY STAIRCASE....
HEY, ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?

END

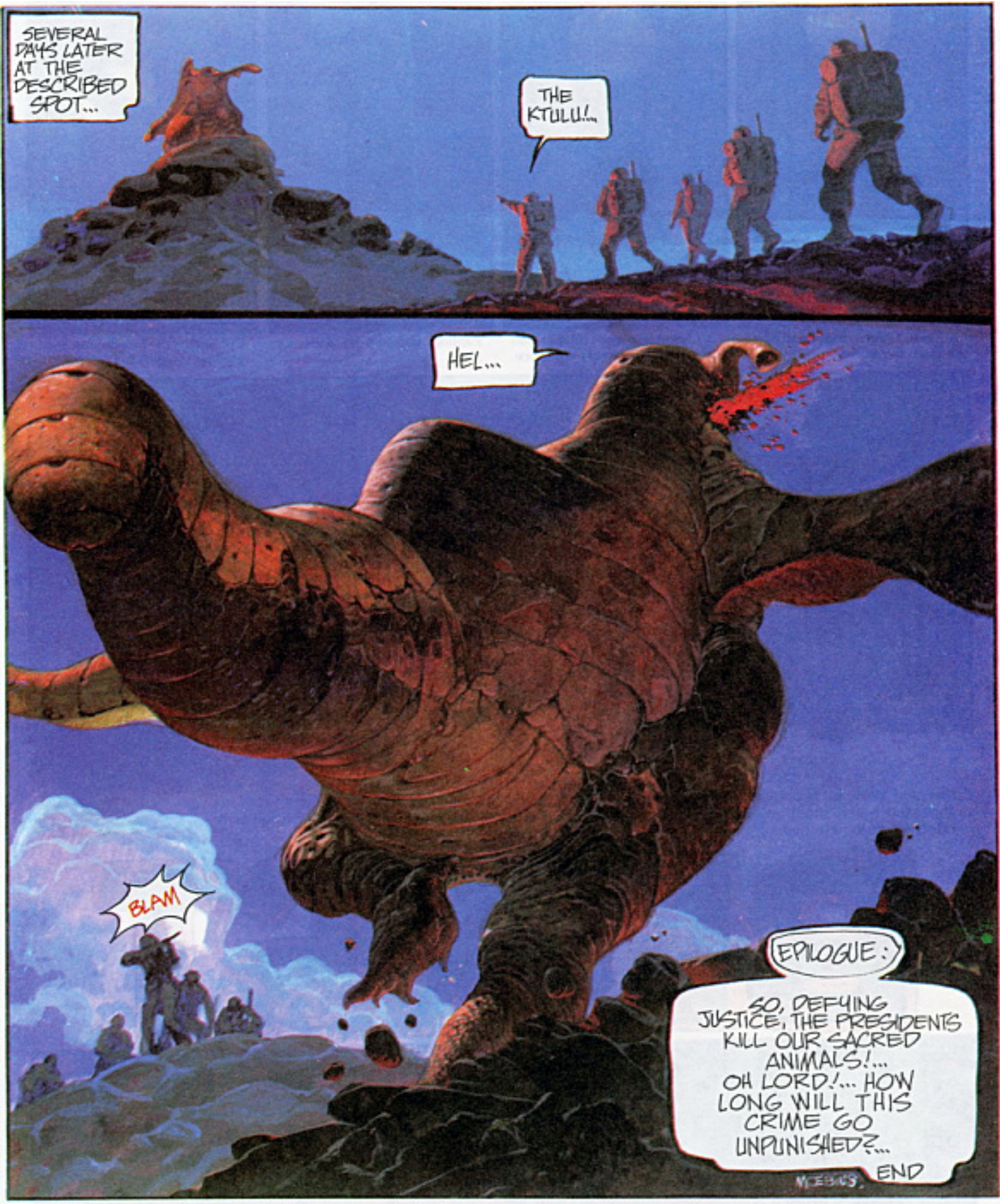

KTULU
PROLOGUE:
THE TIME: THE END OF THE SECOND MILLENNIUM... THE PLACE: A FAMOUS PALACE AT THE END OF THE WEST, WHOSE HORRIBLE SECRET WE ARE ABOUT TO REVEAL...
LOGUE:
BEWITCHED BY THE OBSCURE POWERS THAT RUN RAMPANT IN THE DEEPEST ZONES OF HIS BEING, THE PRESIDENT SEEMS TO PRESIDE, IN FACT...
DIALOGUE:
GENTLEMEN, THE LAST MINISTERIAL COUNCIL BEFORE THE EASTER VACATION HAS NOW CONCLUDED. ...MAY I TAKE THIS OCCASION TO WISH YOU ALL...
HAVE A NICE HOLIDAY YOURSELF, MR. PRESIDENT...
FASTER... FASTER...
THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT, FOR...
...HE AWAITS WITH IMPATIENCE THE HOUR OF KTULU
1

HE MUST STILL SHAKE THE HANDS OF SEVERAL NOTABLES...
MY DEAR MR....
FASTER ooo
AH, MR. PRESIDENT
I... AH, YES!...
AT LAST! THEY'VE GONE!
ALL OF A SUDDEN... HE REACHES A SECRET DOOR...
...HE RUNS ALONG A DARK TRENCH THAT LEADS INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE PALACE...
...UNTIL HE COMES TO A SECRET ANTE-CHAMBER IN FRONT OF THE DOOR TO THE INTERIOR TERRITORIES...
2

THE MASTER OF THE HUNT AWAITS YOU, SIR!...
I WAS HELD UP BY THE COUNCIL!...
THE MASTER DOES NOT LIKE TO WAIT!...


MOEBIUS

THE FIVE MEN ENTER A GIGANTIC CAVERN...
GOOD DAY, LOVECRAFT, I AM THE PRESIDENT, AND I WISH TO HUNT THE KTULU!...
SO THERE YOU ARE, YOU LITTLE COCKROACH OF A PRESIDENT, YOU MAD, CRUEL, HYPOCRITICAL PRESIDENT. YOU COME CLAIMING BLOOD, YOUR SHEEP'S FACE CLOTTED WITH THE SHIT ON YOUR DUMB SKULL.
O.K. O.K.... IT'S IN THE RULES... WE, H.P. LOVECRAFT, HAVE SIGNED A PACT THAT BINDS US WITH THE HUNTERS OF THIS PALACE... YOU WILL FIND A KTULU 3000 YEARS OLD TO THE NORTH OF THE LAVA FIELD NEAR THE TWO FIG TREES....
PLEASE, GREAT LOVECRAFT!... SPARE ME YOUR INSULTS, AND GIVE ME A KTULU!...
MOEBIUS
4

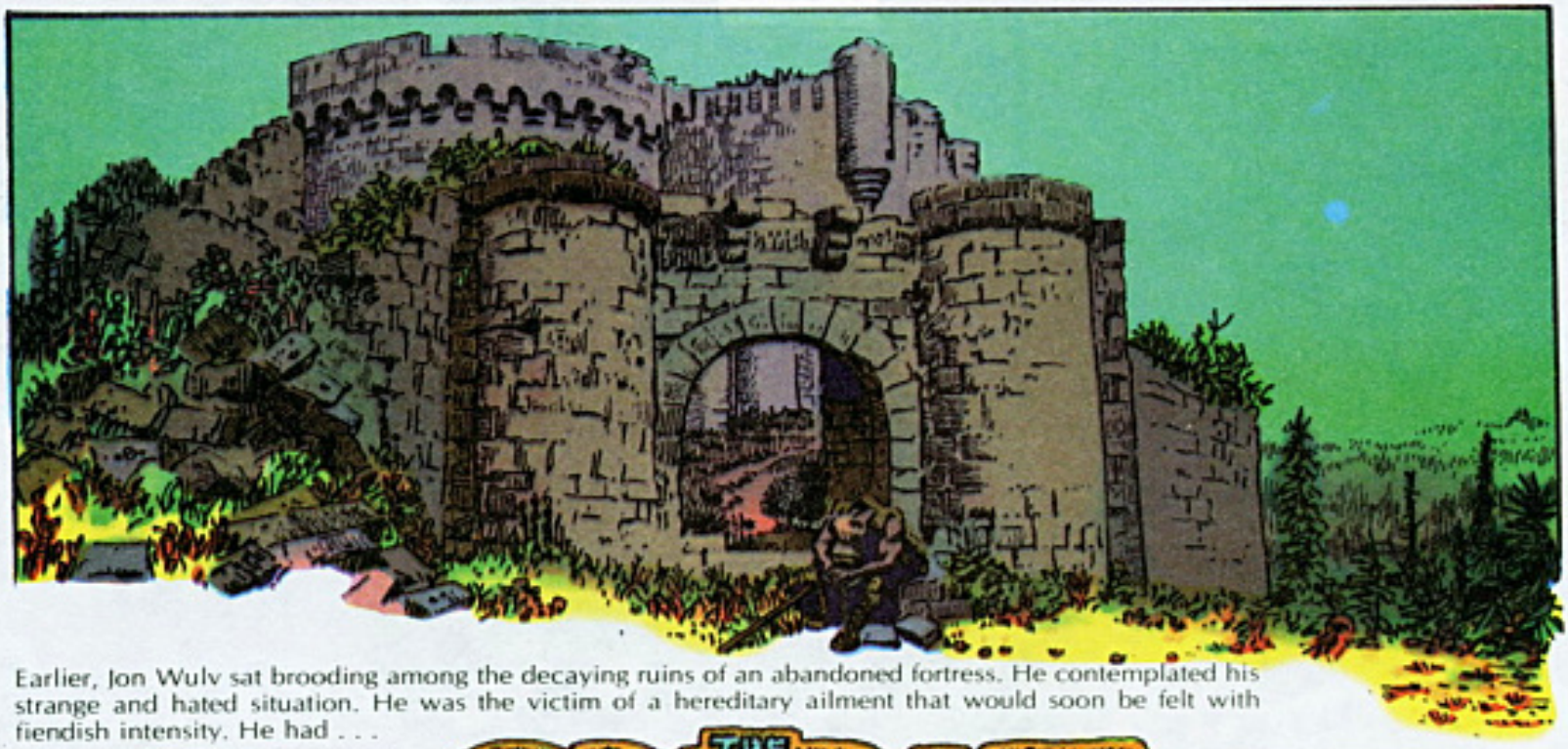

SEVERAL DAYS LATER AT THE DESCRIBED SPOT...
THE KTULU!...
HEL...
BLAM
EPILOGUE:
SO, DEFYING JUSTICE, THE PRESIDENTS KILL OUR SACRED ANIMALS!... OH LORD!... HOW LONG WILL THIS CRIME GO UNPUNISHED?...
END
MOEBIUS

A dark figure runs headlong through the forest.

A horrible fear drives him beyond the limits of endurance.

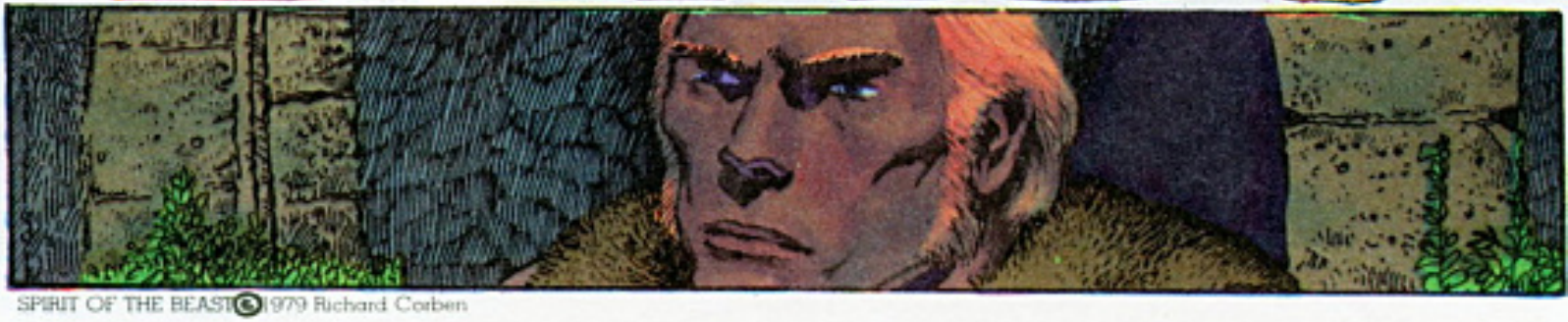
Panting, gasping, he does not stop.

Pursued by the hideous forces of Hell he staggers on.



Earlier, Jon Wulv sat brooding among the decaying ruins of an abandoned fortress. He contemplated his strange and hated situation. He was the victim of a hereditary ailment that would soon be felt with fiendish intensity. He had . . .

THE SPIRIT OF THE BEAST

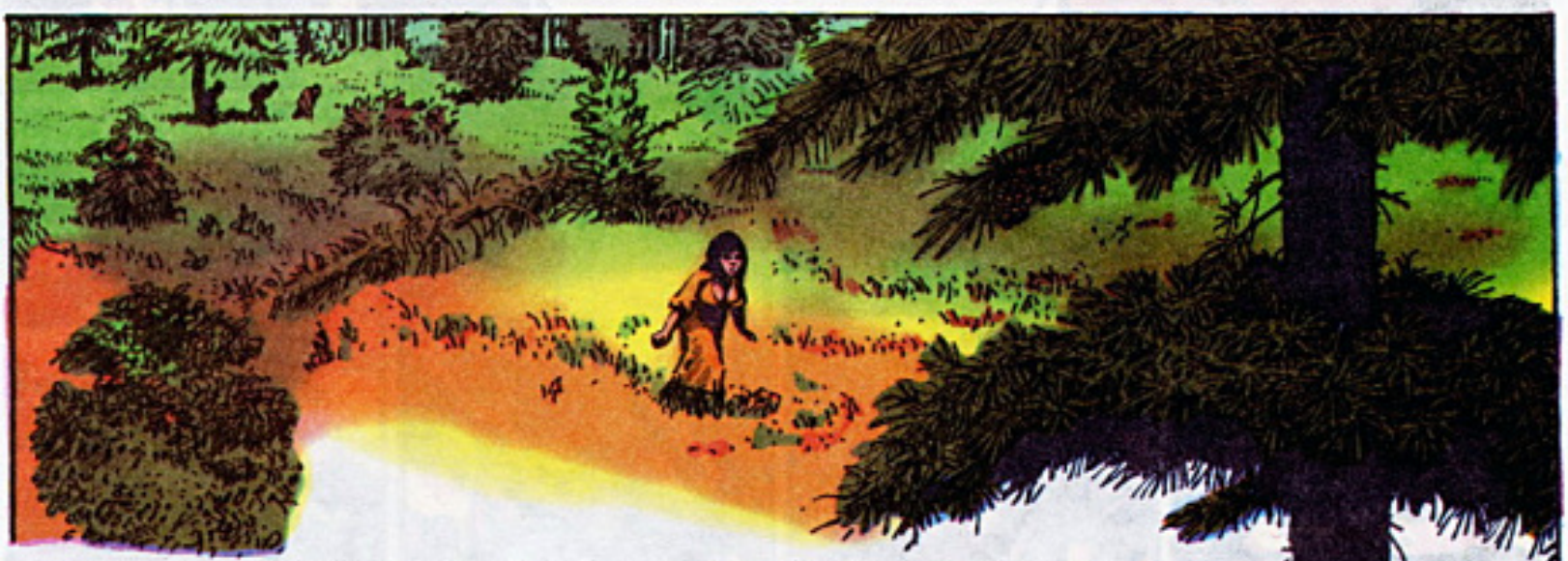


SPIRIT OF THE BEAST © 1979 Richard Corben

The singular condition manifested many side effects, some of which were actually beneficial.

Jon Wulv had never suffered the effects of normal diseases; his strength was inhuman.

His senses of sight, smell, and hearing were acute.



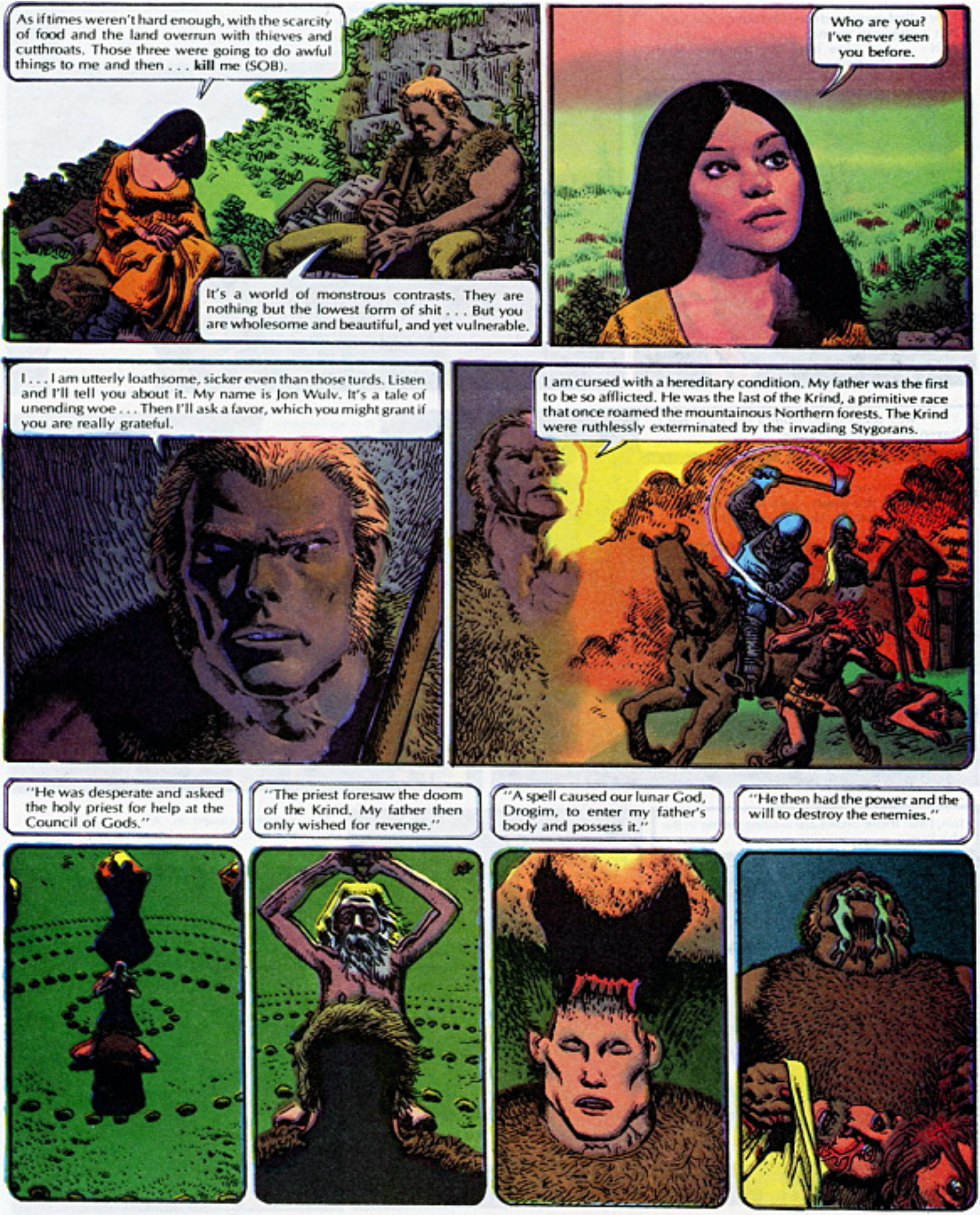
A peasant girl approached the lonely artifact. She seemed apprehensive, frequently stopping to survey the woods and field. Three men stealthily followed her.

Jon Wulv hid in the crumbling castle keep.

As the girl entered the scattered stonework, the pursuing party split and sent one member to flank their prey.

She turned and saw the men.

AAAIIEEH!
C'mon Jack, I got 'er.
Heh, heh, heh! **Hey,** stop fighting you bitch or you'll go out hard!
Intent on their play, the three men did not see Jon Wulv approach.
WHAK!
OOF!
THOK
KRAK
BEGONE or I'll kick your god-damned heads in!
Oh thank you. They were going to kill me. I'm sure of it.
Never mind. I didn't like their looks, anyway.


As if times weren't hard enough, with the scarcity of food and the land overrun with thieves and cutthroats. Those three were going to do awful things to me and then . . . **kill** me (SOB).
It's a world of monstrous contrasts. They are nothing but the lowest form of shit . . . But you are wholesome and beautiful, and yet vulnerable.
Who are you? I've never seen you before.
I . . . I am utterly loathsome, sicker even than those turds. Listen and I'll tell you about it. My name is Jon Wulv. It's a tale of unending woe . . . Then I'll ask a favor, which you might grant if you are really grateful.
I am cursed with a hereditary condition. My father was the first to be so afflicted. He was the last of the Krind, a primitive race that once roamed the mountainous Northern forests. The Krind were ruthlessly exterminated by the invading Stygorans.
"He was desperate and asked the holy priest for help at the Council of Gods."
"The priest foresaw the doom of the Krind. My father then only wished for revenge."
"A spell caused our lunar God, Drogim, to enter my father's body and possess it."
"He then had the power and the will to destroy the enemies."

"He killed many and they fled our sacred land. But a Stygoran woman tricked him, seduced him . . . and slew him. The fearsome seed survived. She begat me."

So the spirit of Drogim is within me. During the lunar cycle when the moon is full . . . I become a beast like my father.

Tonight the moon is full!

Yes. I was seeking aid from a sorceror, but I haven't found him in time.

Please grant me this favor. There is a strong cell yet intact in this tower. Lock me in it now and release me at dawn. I beg you lest I shed blood.

It is so fantastic, but I will do as you ask.

Jon, I fear those brutes are waiting for me in the shadows.

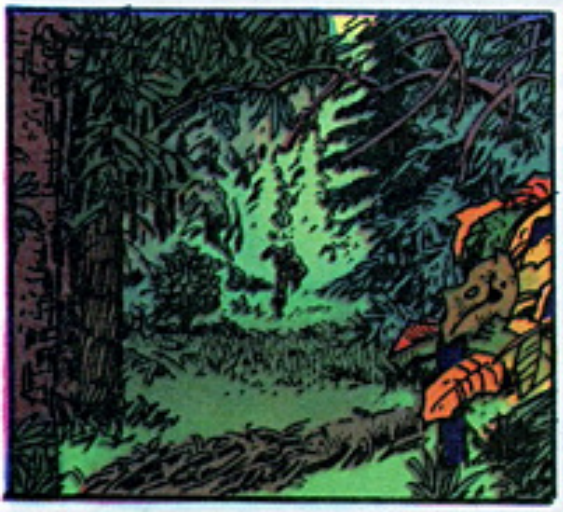
Run away from the door if you value your sanity!

Jon, I love you. Let me stay.

UUURRNNTH! BEGONE!

The darkness closed in. All was silent for a while. She heard his breathing become louder and coarser.

C'mon. It's dark enough. They're still in the donjon.
I'll repay that clod. OOWCH! My leg is still killing me. Swellin' up.
Heh, heh, heh! It'll be sweet work tonight.
Ah, there she is. I get first cut!
AAAH!
HA HA HA!
BAM BAM BAM
OOOH!
SKRIIK
POP!



Jon Wulv runs. The bloodlust is now gone as if it were only a dream. He remembers nothing but a vague sense of violent frenzy. He runs in horror. He runs to escape the spirit of Drogim, but it is always there, in his head. There is one odd thing, though. The remains of the bodies showed that they had been roasted over a fire. Werewolves don't cook their victims, do they?

THE END

Damn you! You killed my brother.
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
C'mon! She must've jumped.
UNNGH!
Do ya see her?
BAM BAM BAM
Unf! No, NO!
NO, NO, PLEASE!

UPSTART THEATER
presents
SHAKESPEARE FOR AMERICANS
HI. I'M WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, PLAYWRIGHT. YOU KNOW, THE BARD OF AVON?
CALL ME BILL.
"TO BE, OR NOT TO BE..." "OUT, DAMNED SPOT! OUT, I SAY!" JULIUS CAESAR. MACBETH!
THOSE GRIM PLAYS YOU HAD TO WADE THROUGH FOR MRS. BLAVATSKI IN HIGH SCHOOL WERE MINE.
PLODDING, OLD-FASHIONED STUFF! BUT DURABLE!
WHY, TODAY, IN THE NAME OF CULTURE, MY PLAYS ARE STILL BEING RESURRECTED EVERYWHERE!
EVEN HERE...
...IN AMERICA. BUT LET'S BE HONEST WITH EACH OTHER. IT'S ALWAYS TAKEN YOU AT LEAST AN ACT JUST TO DECIPHER THE LANGUAGE IN THE PLAYS, HASN'T IT?
AND YOU NEVER REALLY DO GET THE DIRTY JOKES.
EVEN I DON'T TALK LIKE THAT ANYMORE.
TODAY, COMMUNICATIONS ARE INSTANT, AND BECAUSE EVERYTHING RACES BY SO QUICKLY, NOBODY NEEDS AN ATTENTION SPAN LONGER THAN A CAR CHASE.
BEARING THIS IN MIND, I'VE DECIDED TO BRING BACK MY PLAYS IN A FORM FOR MODERN AUDIENCES...
...WHERE YOU DON'T HAVE TO SPEND AN ACT RELEARNING ELIZABETHAN ENGLISH IN ORDER TO DISCOVER JUST WHO IS SLEEPING WITH WHOM.
HERE, THROUGH THE COURTESY OF UPSTART THEATER, AND OF COURSE, OUR SPONSOR...
...MY PLAYS WILL LIVE AGAIN AS BRIEF BUT TELLING PRESENTATIONS OF GENRE FICTION!
SO, SIT BACK, TURN ON YOUR MAGAZINE, AND RELAX, AS ONCE A MONTH WE PRESENT FOR YOUR AMAZED EYES...
...SHAKESPEARE FOR AMERICANS!
WS

"SHAKESPEARE FOR AMERICANS" IS MADE POSSIBLE BY A GRANT FROM HEAVY METAL CORPORATION.

SOFT LANDING

Concept: Dan O'Bannon
Art: Thomas Warkentin

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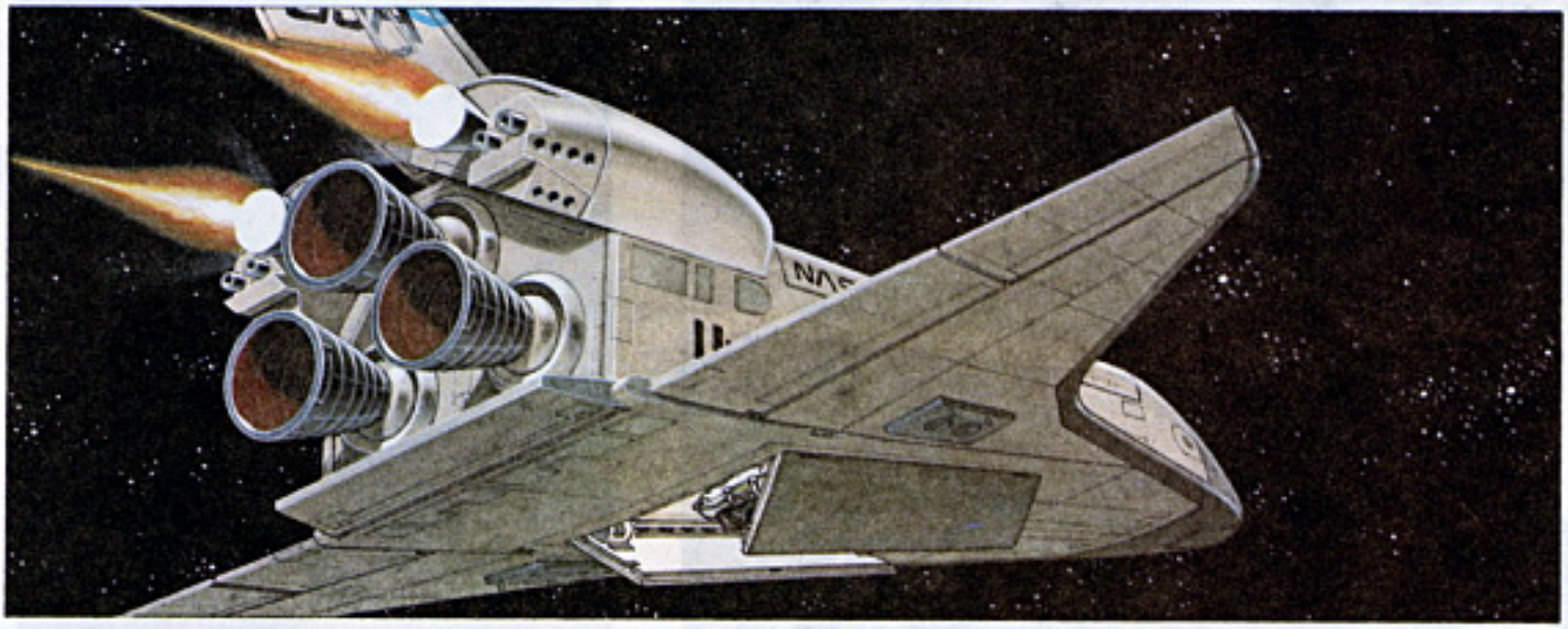
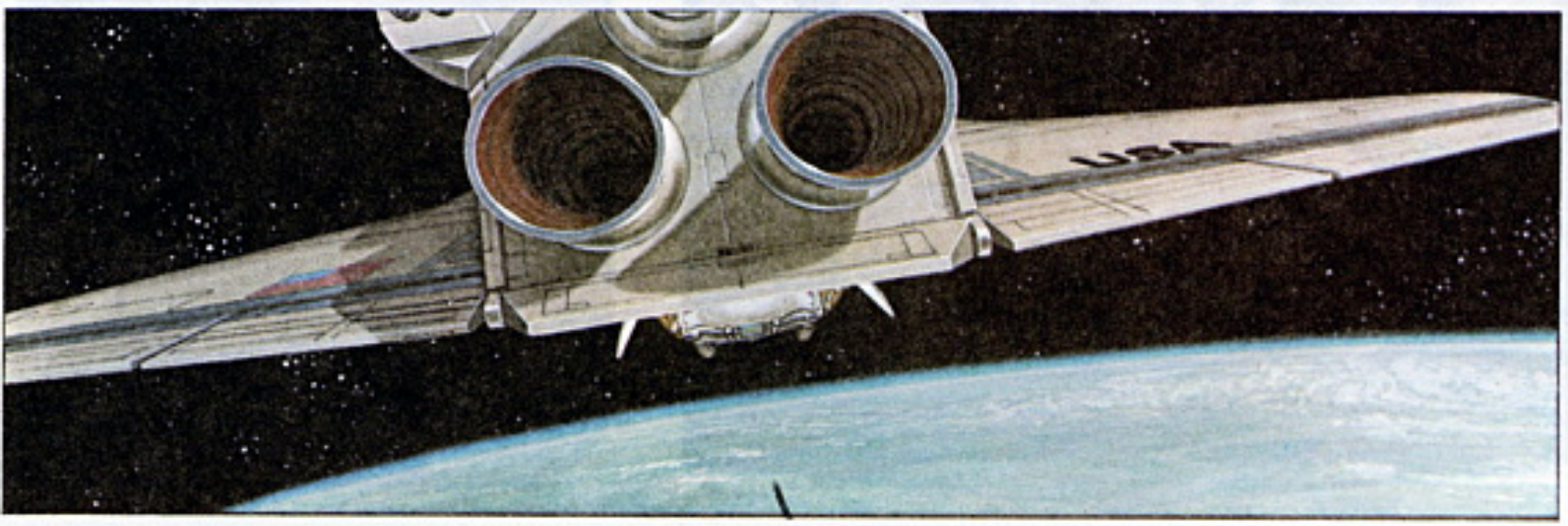
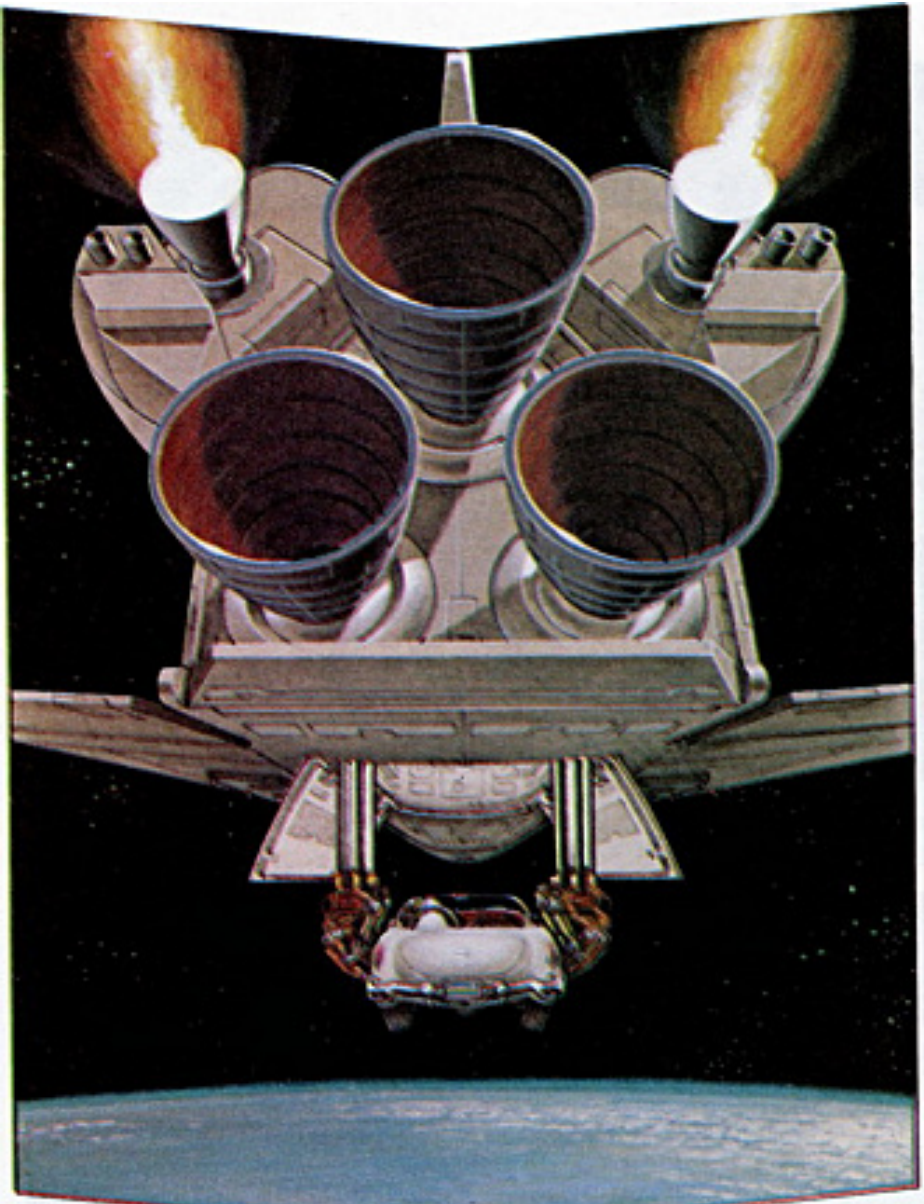
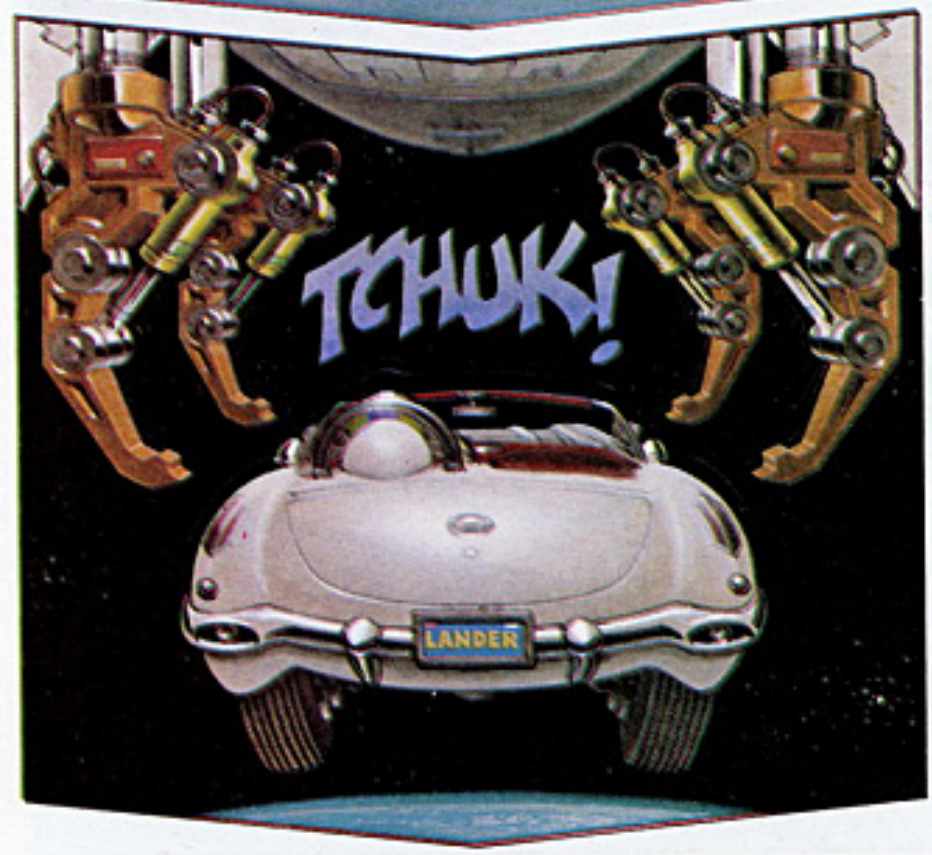
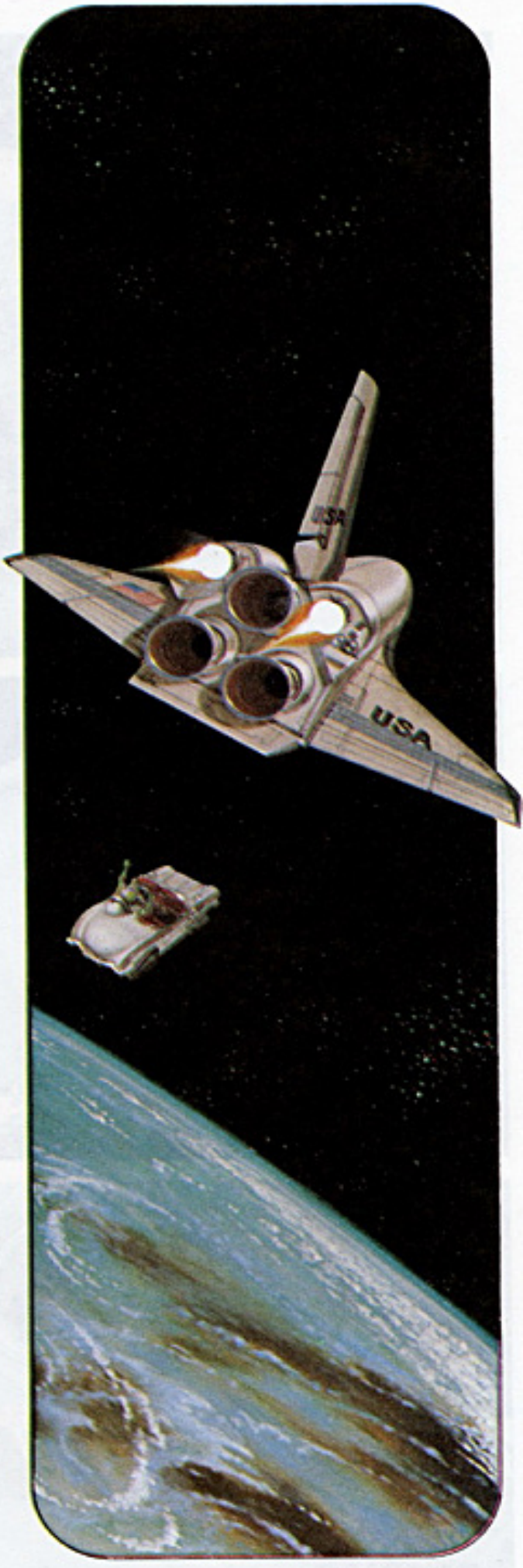







TCHUK!
LANDER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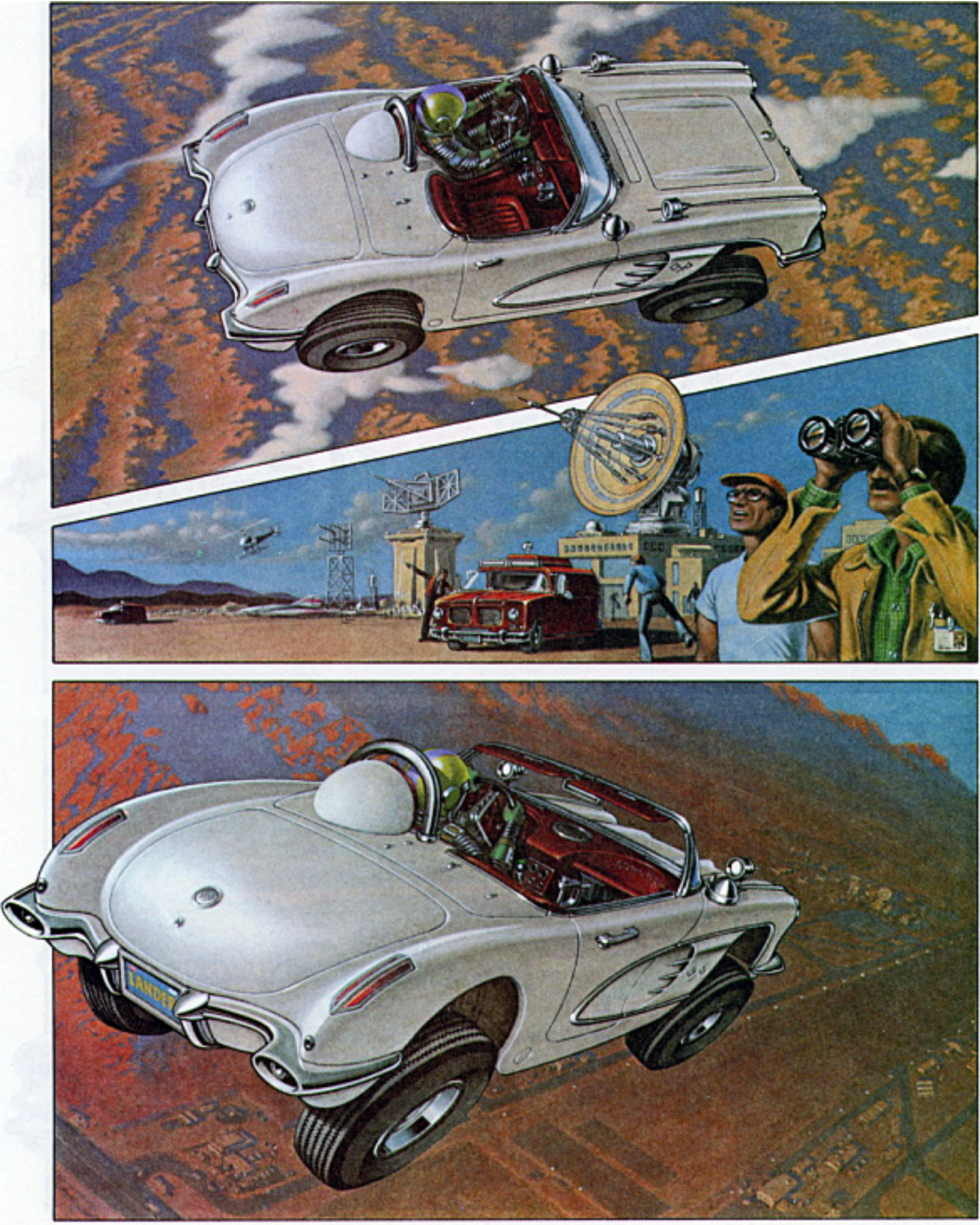
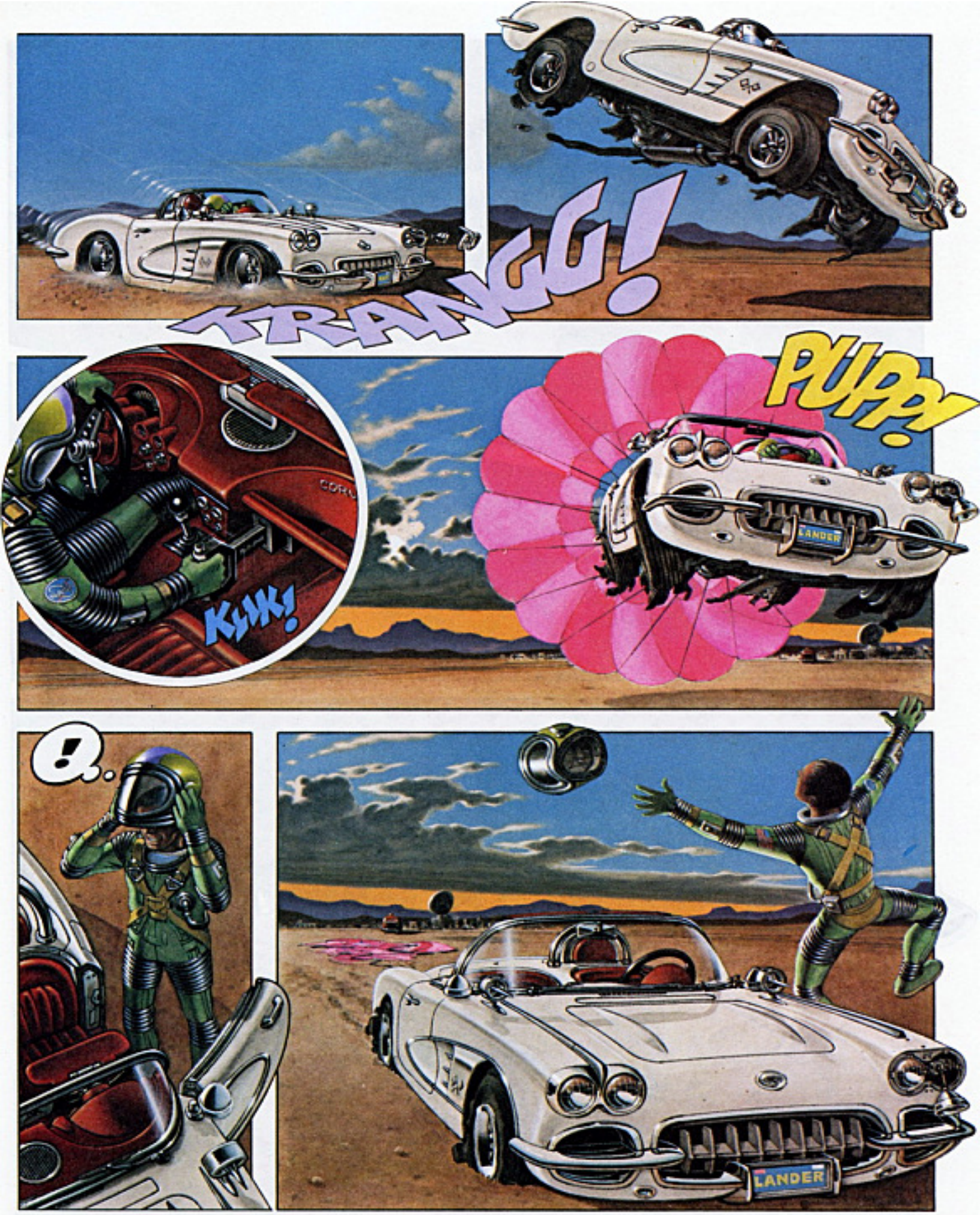
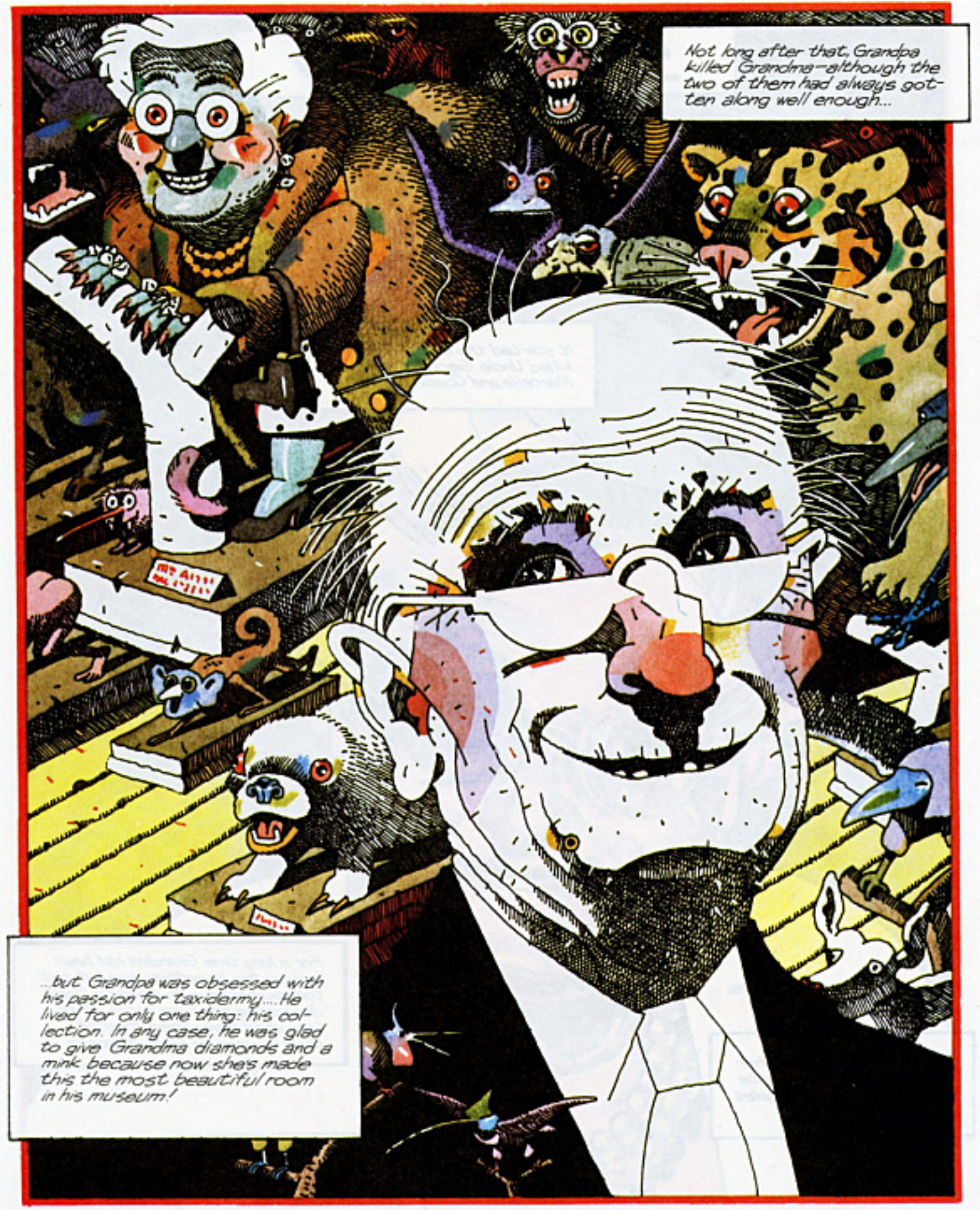

LANDER


KRANGG!
KIIK!
PUPP!
LANDER
!
LANDER

Sans Family
It started the day Grandma killed Uncle George, Aunt Marcelle and Cousin Edith.
They had come to visit her at her invitation, to taste her famous Baked Apples with Cream....
For a long time Grandma had been looking for something nice but not too expensive with which to finish decorating her living room.... Then too, she'd never been fond of Uncle George or Aunt Marcelle.
She didn't dislike Cousin Edith, but one can't always do exactly what one wants to do....


Not long after that, Grandpa killed Grandma—although the two of them had always gotten along well enough...
...but Grandpa was obsessed with his passion for taxidermy.... He lived for only one thing: his collection. In any case, he was glad to give Grandma diamonds and a mink because now she's made this the most beautiful room in his museum!

Then again there's Papa, who in his turn killed Grandpa. Papa loved Grandpa, but Grandpa had millions of little twitchy habits that exasperated Papa....
On this particular day Grandpa kept biting his nails, and, worse, he wouldn't stop cracking his knuckles...
...and to top it off, he smacked his dentures while he ate his biscuits! It was too much for poor Papa's nerves, but he was able to calm himself down afterward by putting things neatly away....

That was when Mama killed Papa.....
All day long Papa criticized and supervised everything Mama did. And on this particular morning, because she still hadn't had her coffee and her cigarette, Mama was in a dreadful mood when Papa told her that she didn't understand anything and never did a damned thing except think about food.
It is true that Mama loved cooking. She was especially good with pâtés.

And it was about then that my older brother Bobby killed my little sister Zizette, whose attempts to learn to play the piano bothered him enormously.
Poor Bobby! He enjoyed solitude and silence so much. He loved to spend his time in his room quietly classifying his rocks, his shells, and his butterflies. He absolutely hated noise.

A few days later our neighbor, Mr. Tartignol, killed Bobby, who was on his way home from school. He thought Bobby might be a burglar.
Mr. Tartignol was really very sorry about his mistake.
He asked Mama to let him take care of Bobby's funeral himself, and at his expense, of course... it was, after all, the least he could do!

Well, to wrap this up, the destiny which always claims us deprived me of my mother's affection.
Did I just hear you say that it was I who killed Mama? That's completely untrue! She was never in good health, after all.
Let's get this straight: I don't blame her for anything! She did what she could, poor woman... she was a very devoted mother.

I was left a poor orphan, completely alone in the world, the only survivor of my unfortunate family. But I was taken in by some very nice people who, although they had four children of their own, generously offered to take care of me.
They even planned a fine meal to celebrate my arrival...ah, well! You probably won't believe me when I tell you this, but they died from food poisoning! It seems the mayonnaise had gone bad!

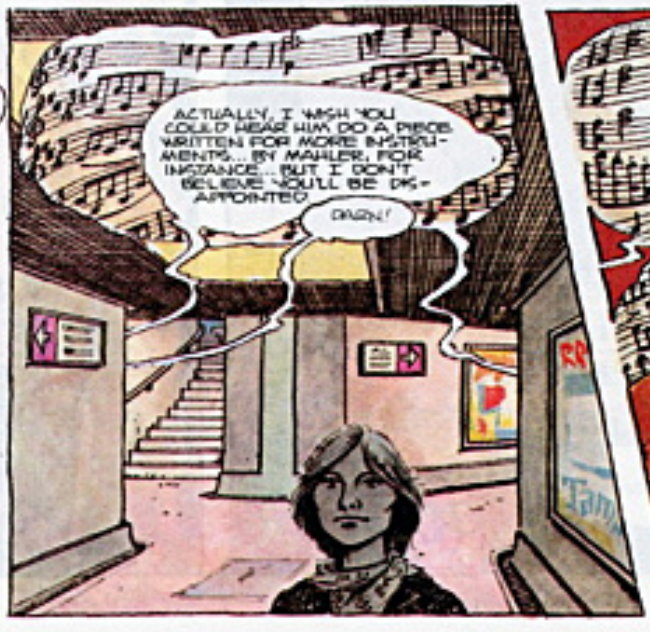
Stories from London

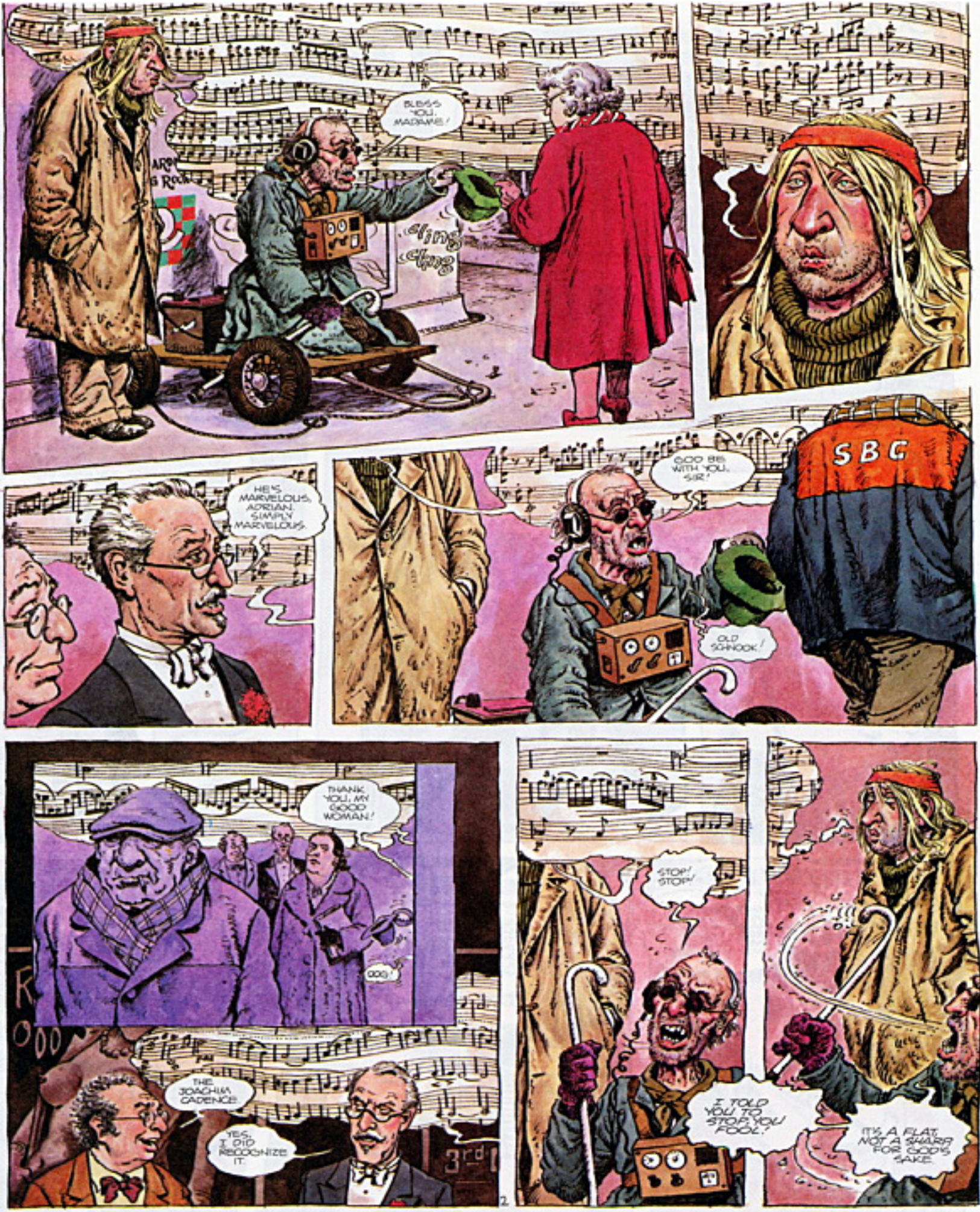
BUT I'M CONDUCTING A CONCERT AT THE FESTIVAL HALL AT SEVEN O'CLOCK!
THIS WILL ONLY TAKE US HALF AN HOUR, CHRISTOPHER. THIS GUN IS INCREDIBLE!

IT'S AMAZING, CHRISTOPHER! BRUCKNER'S NINTH SYMPHONY—ENTIRELY FROM MEMORY! AND HE SUCCEEDS IN DOING THE WHOLE SCORE WITH SUCH PRECISION, SUCH A FEELING OF SUBTLETY... HE ALSO HAS INTERPRETED THE SOLO FROM THE BACH SONATA IN C MINOR. I WOULD NEVER HAVE BELIEVED THAT SUCH AN EXECUTION COULD BE POSSIBLE ON ANYTHING OTHER THAN A VIOLIN...
YES, ADRIAN, OF COURSE—BUT...

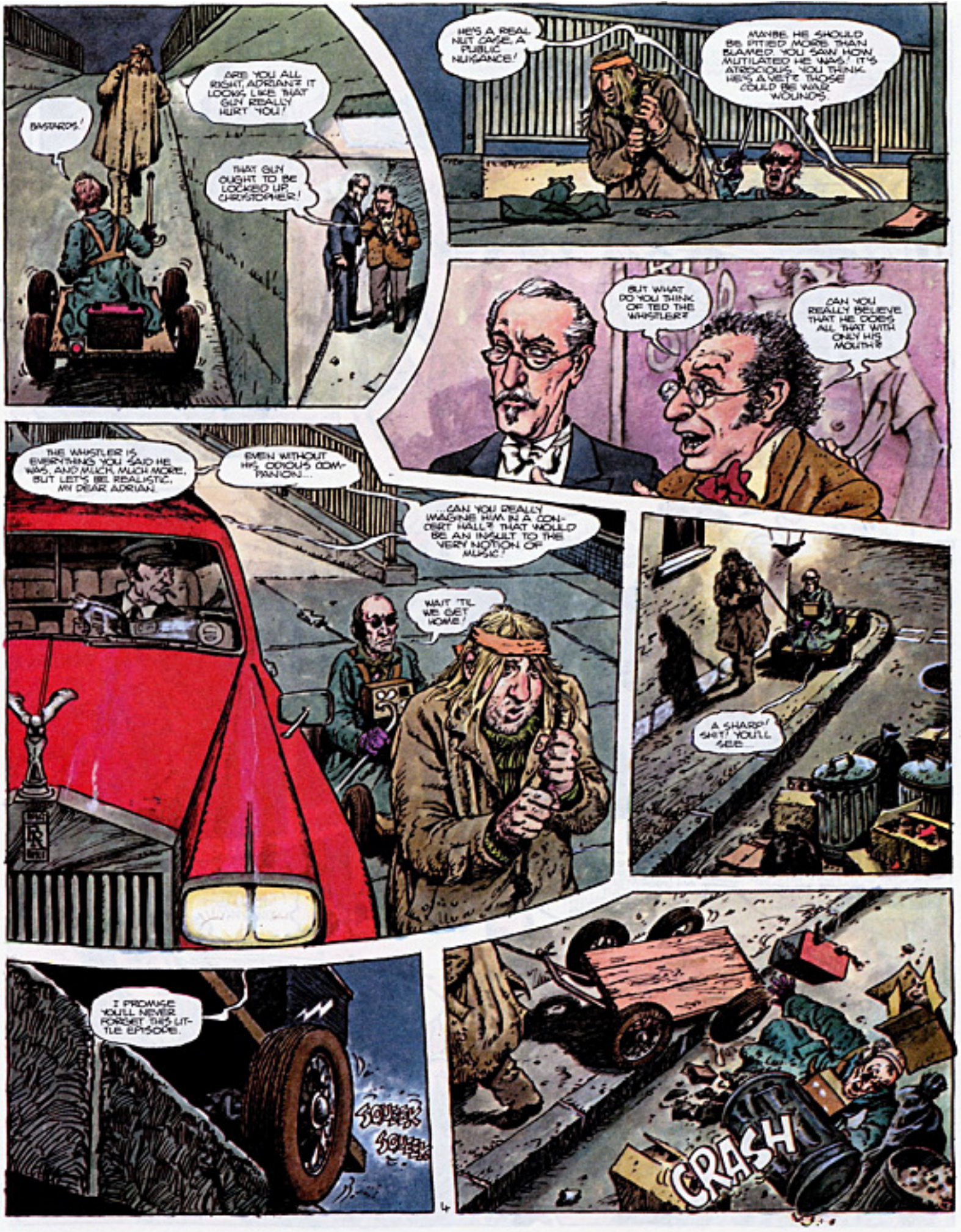
BUT CHRISTOPHER, HIS INTERPRETATION REVEALS A REAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE MUSICAL WORKS, AND HIS TECHNIQUE IS ABSOLUTELY PERFECT. I'M READY TO STAKE MY REPUTATION ON IT.

THAT'S WHY I AGREED TO ACCOMPANY YOU HERE, ADRIAN. I AM TRULY ANXIOUS TO SEE IF YOU ARE AN EASY CRITIC TO SATISFY. IN THE PAST, YOU HAVE BEEN THE MOST NITPICKING CRITIC I KNOW.
BUT I HAVE THE GREATEST CONFIDENCE IN YOUR JUDGMENT. AND...
PEDESTRI SUBWA


ACTUALLY, I WISH YOU COULD HEAR HIM DO A PIECE WRITTEN FOR MORE INSTRUMENTS... BY MAHLER, FOR INSTANCE... BUT I DON'T BELIEVE YOU'LL BE DISAPPOINTED.
DAGNY!


BLESS YOU, MADAMME!
cling cling
SBC
GOD BE WITH YOU, SIR!
OLD SCHNOOK!
HE'S MARVELOUS, ADRIAN. SIMPLY MARVELLOUS.
THANK YOU, MY GOOD WOMAN!
OOO!
THE JOACHIM CADENCE!
YES, I DID RECOGNIZE IT.
STOP! STOP!
I TOLD YOU TO STOP, YOU FOOL!
IT'S A FLAT, NOT A SHARP FOR GOD'S SAKE.

HEY, HEY, CALM DOWN! DON'T GET SO UPSET! YOU'RE MAKING A MOUNTAIN OUT OF A MOLEHILL!
ANYWAY, YOUR FRIEND HERE IS REALLY DOING VERY WELL.
I AM ADRIAN TONES, MUSIC CRITIC AND POLEMICIST FOR THE CHATTERER. THIS IS SIR CHRISTOPHER HARMON, THE FAMOUS CONDUCTOR.
YEAH? WELL, WHO ARE YOU?
NO! COME ON! NO KIDDING!
WELL, LISTEN, MAN. IF I SAY IT'S AN A FLAT, IT'S AN A FLAT. GOT IT?
AND THIS BASTARD IS GOING TO WHISTLE AN A FLAT OR I'LL...
CRAC!
SIR! I BEG YOU TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THAT THIS "BASTARD" AS YOU'VE JUST CALLED HIM, IS A VERITABLE GENIUS!
YEAH? DO YA HEAR THAT, TED? THIS MAN, HMM, NICE JACKET, BY THE WAY, HAS JUST CALLED YOU A GENIUS. MAYBE I DO PREVENT YOU FROM LIVING YOUR OWN LIFE, HUH? WAY, YOU MIGHT EVEN BECOME THE MOST FAMOUS WHISTLER TO EVER COME OUT OF THE SUBWAYS!
WHY, YOU'RE ONLY A VILE PROFITEER! AN UNGRATEFUL PARASITE! WITHOUT THE INCREDIBLE TALENT OF THIS POOR MAN...
YOU'RE NOTHING... OWWW!
GET OUT OF HERE, YOU PANSY!
3


BASTARDS!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, ADRIAN? IT LOOKS LIKE THAT GUY REALLY HURT YOU!
THAT GUY OUGHT TO BE LOCKED UP, CHRYSTOPHER!
HE'S A REAL NUT CASE, A PUBLIC NUISANCE!
MAYBE HE SHOULD BE PITIED MORE THAN BLAMED. YOU SAW HOW MUTILATED HE WAS! IT'S ATROCIOUS, YOU THINK HE'S A VET? THOSE COULD BE WAR WOUNDS.
BUT WHAT DO YOU THINK OF TED THE WHISTLER?
CAN YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT HE DOES ALL THAT WITH ONLY HIS MOUTH?
THE WHISTLER IS EVERYTHING YOU SAID HE WAS, AND MUCH, MUCH MORE, BUT LET'S BE REALISTIC, MY DEAR ADRIAN.
EVEN WITHOUT HIS ODIOUS COMPANION...
...CAN YOU REALLY IMAGINE HIM IN A CONCERT HALL? THAT WOULD BE AN INSULT TO THE VERY NOTION OF MUSIC!
WAIT 'TIL WE GET HOME!
A SHARD! SHIT! YOU'LL SEE...
I PROMISE YOU'LL NEVER FORGET THIS LITTLE EPISODE.
SQUEEK SQUEEK
CRASH

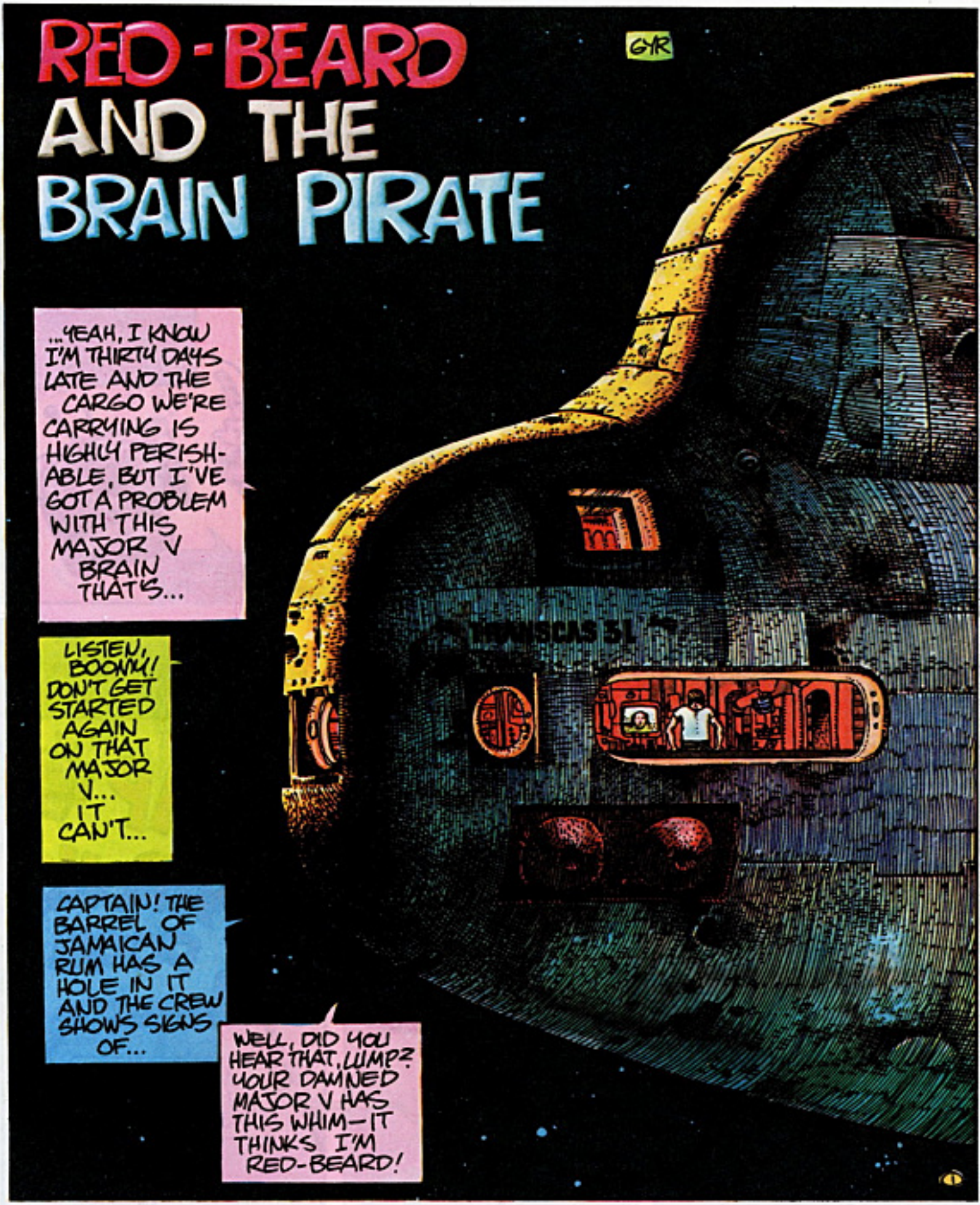
PAUL! UGGH!
GOT OUT HOGS
ADELPHI THEATRE
HEY, BASTARD! IDIOT! FOOL! COME HERE OR I'LL MAKE YOU PAY!
GRRR!
SHE CANE, YOU IMBECILE!
HUDLEY STREET!
WHACK
SMACK
BASH
HAH! IDIOT!
CLOSED
HELLO, HELLO! 1, 2, 3, 4, 5... SHIT! I HEAR ONLY STATIC! THE MACHINE IS BROKEN!
MOTHER OF GOD! NOT ONLY BLIND BUT NOW DEAF AS WELL! ONLY THAT WAS MISSING!
I'M NOT GOING TO GET MAD HERE, BUT JUST WAIT 'TIL WE GET HOME...

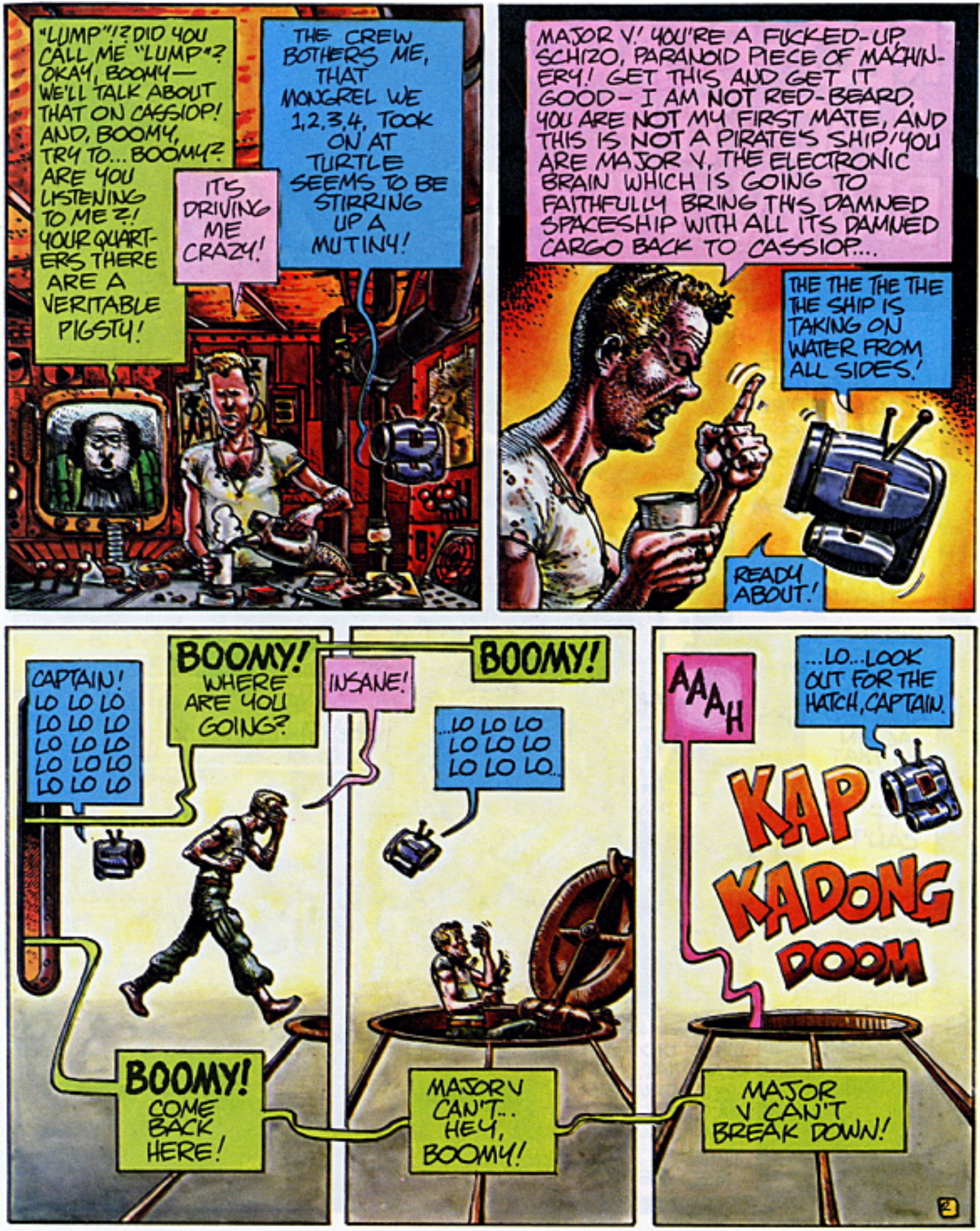
SCEEEECK
CRUNCH
HOLY SHIT!
TED, YOU ASSHOLE! YOU DESERVE WHAT I HAVE IN STORE FOR YOU!
TAKE HEED OF WHAT I SAY. ENOUGH'S ENOUGH! THIS IS THE LAST TIME YOU'LL EVER MAKE A MISTAKE!
"A GENIUS."

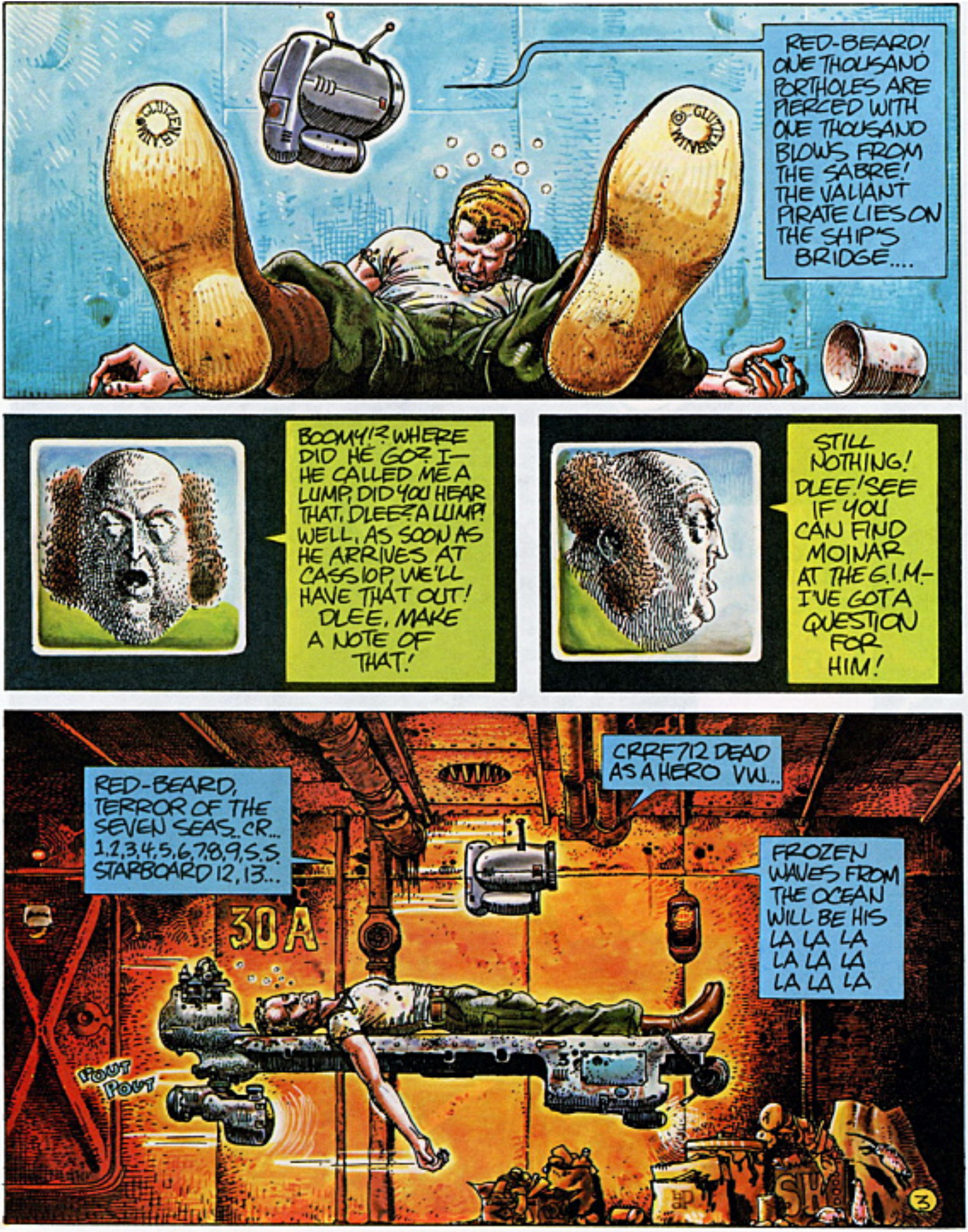
"A GENIUS!" I'LL GET YOU...
SURE, YOU'RE A "GENIUS."
A GENIUS OF IDIOCY!
WE'RE NOT GOING TO STAND HERE ALL NIGHT, ARE WE? GO ON, WHISTLE THE PASS-WORD!
WELCOME AND COME IN, CHARLES AND TED THE WHISTLER!
CLAC
[SNIFF, SNIFF] OOF! FINALLY AT HOME! SET ME DOWN!
FIRST THINGS FIRST!
I MUST TEACH YOU A LESSON!
GO SIT OVER THERE!
YOU BETTER BEGIN WHISTLING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM, TED, 'CAUSE THIS BLOW HERE WILL BE IT.

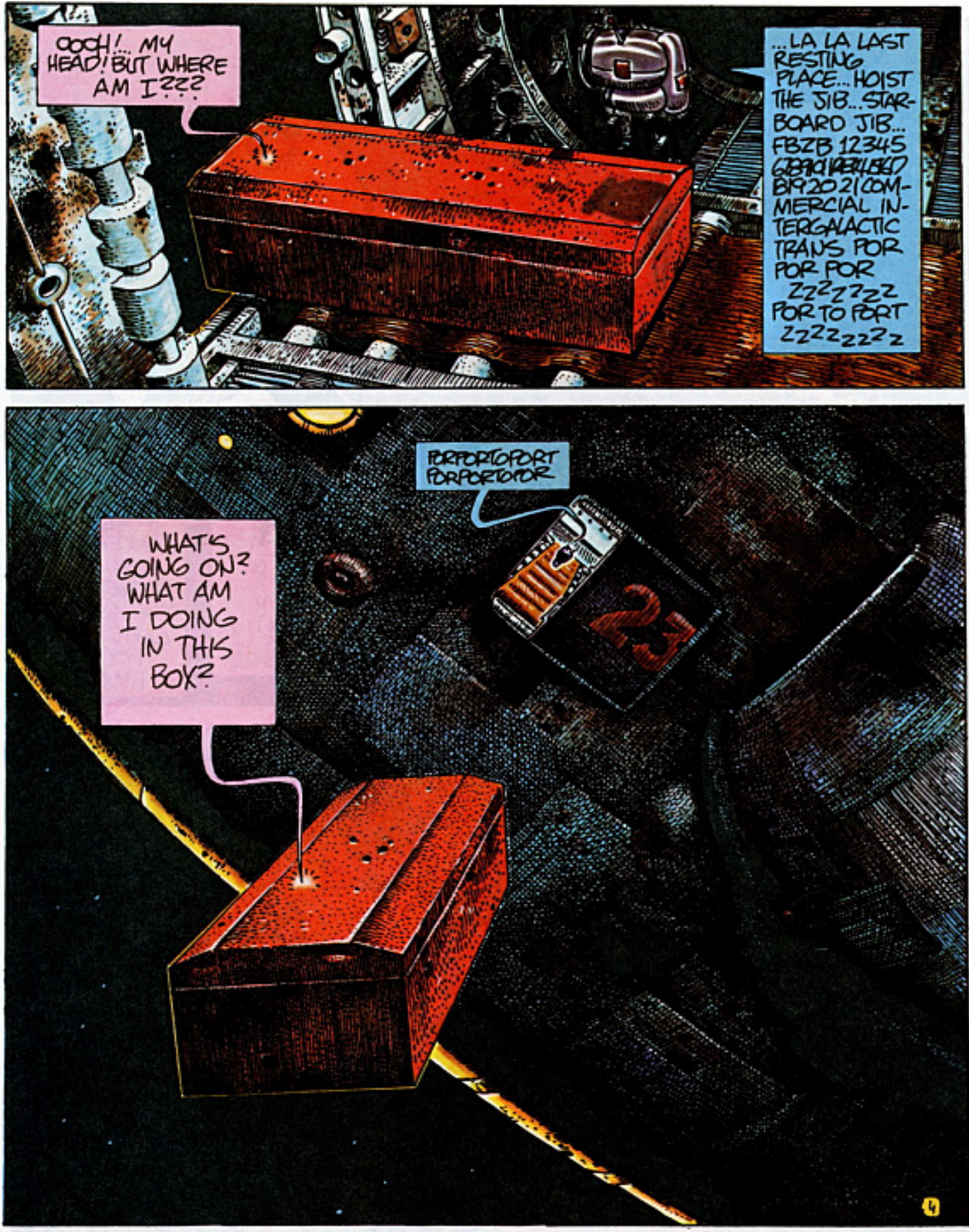
GOOD EVENING!
ZAP
JESUS, THAT WAS STUPID... I LET MY ANGER GET THE BEST OF ME.
WELL DONE!
YOU'RE ONLY A STUPID MACHINE!
I'LL MAKE A BETTER ONE NEXT TIME!
WHAT BOTHERS ME IS THAT IT'S NOT IMPORTANT HOW WE MAKE THEM...
...BUT THE MACHINES ALWAYS LET YOU DOWN IN THE END...
CLICK... THE MACHINES ALWAYS LET YOU... CLICK...
ALWAYS LET YOU... CLICK...
ALWAYS LET YOU... CLICK... DOWN...
...IN THE END... CLICK!

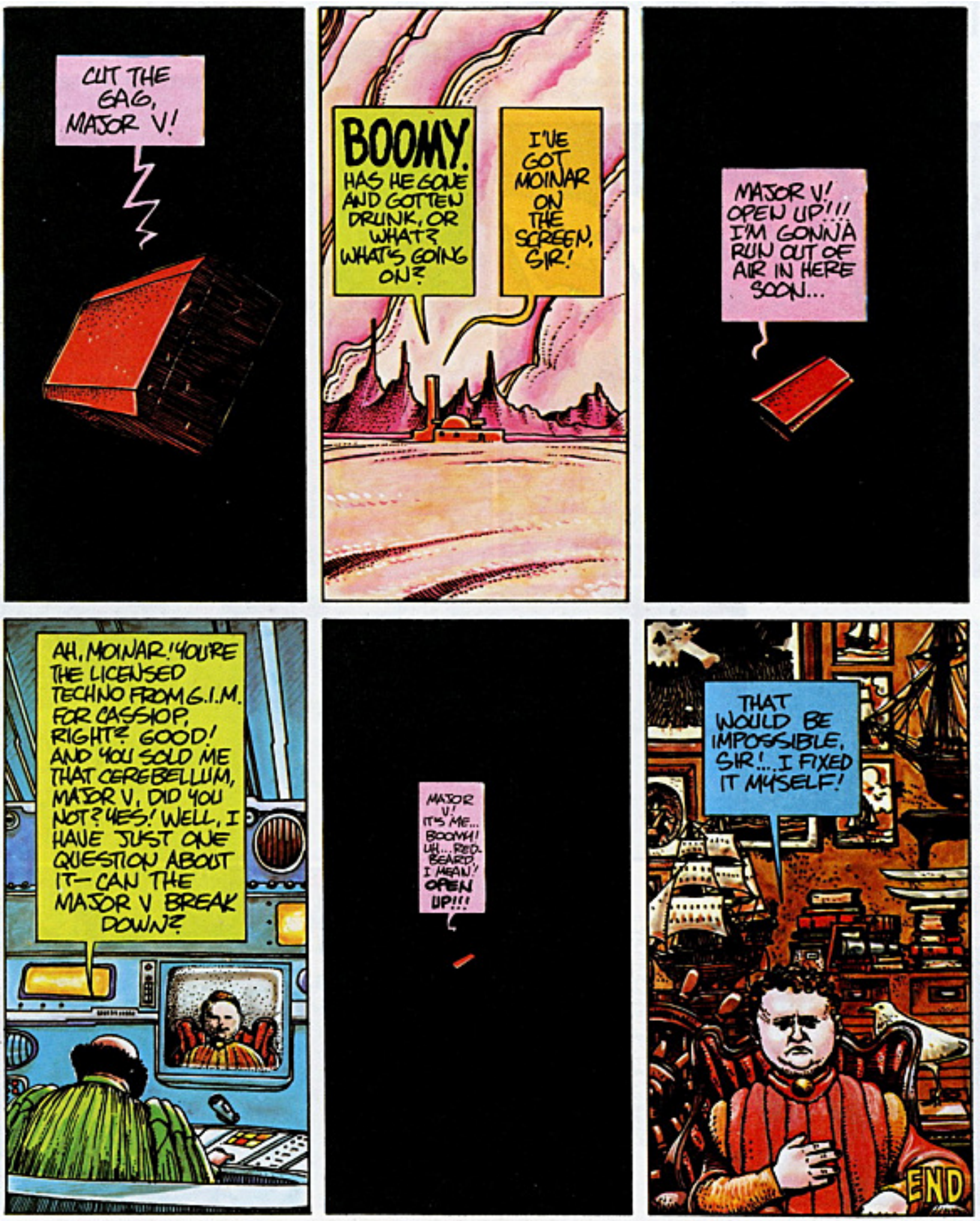
RED-BEARD AND THE BRAIN PIRATE


GYR
...YEAH, I KNOW I'M THIRTY DAYS LATE AND THE CARGO WE'RE CARRYING IS HIGHLY PERISHABLE, BUT I'VE GOT A PROBLEM WITH THIS MAJOR V BRAIN THAT'S...
LISTEN, BOONY! DON'T GET STARTED AGAIN ON THAT MAJOR V... IT CAN'T...
CAPTAIN! THE BARREL OF JAMAICAN RUM HAS A HOLE IN IT AND THE CREW SHOWS SIGNS OF...
WELL, DID YOU HEAR THAT, LUMP? YOUR DAMNED MAJOR V HAS THIS WHIM—IT THINKS I'M RED-BEARD!


"LUMP"!? DID YOU CALL ME "LUMP"? OKAY, BOOMY— WE'LL TALK ABOUT THAT ON CASSIOP! AND, BOOMY, TRY TO... BOOMY? ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?! YOUR QUARTERS THERE ARE A VERITABLE PIGSTY!
IT'S DRIVING ME CRAZY!
THE CREW BOTHERS ME, THAT MONGREL WE 1,2,3,4, TOOK ON AT TURTLE SEEMS TO BE STIRRING UP A MUTINY!
MAJOR V! YOU'RE A FUCKED-UP SCHIZO, PARANOID PIECE OF MACHINERY! GET THIS AND GET IT GOOD - I AM NOT RED-BEARD, YOU ARE NOT MY FIRST MATE, AND THIS IS NOT A PIRATE'S SHIP! YOU ARE MAJOR V, THE ELECTRONIC BRAIN WHICH IS GOING TO FAITHFULLY BRING THIS DAMNED SPACESHIP WITH ALL ITS DAMNED CARGO BACK TO CASSIOP...
THE THE THE THE THE SHIP IS TAKING ON WATER FROM ALL SIDES!
READY ABOUT!
CAPTAIN! LO LO LO LO LO LO LO LO LO LO LO LO
BOOMY! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
INSANE!
BOOMY!
...LO LO LO LO LO LO LO...
AAAH
...LO...LOOK OUT FOR THE HATCH, CAPTAIN.
KAP KADONG DOOM
BOOMY! COME BACK HERE!
MAJOR V CAN'T.. HEY, BOOMY!
MAJOR V CAN'T BREAK DOWN!

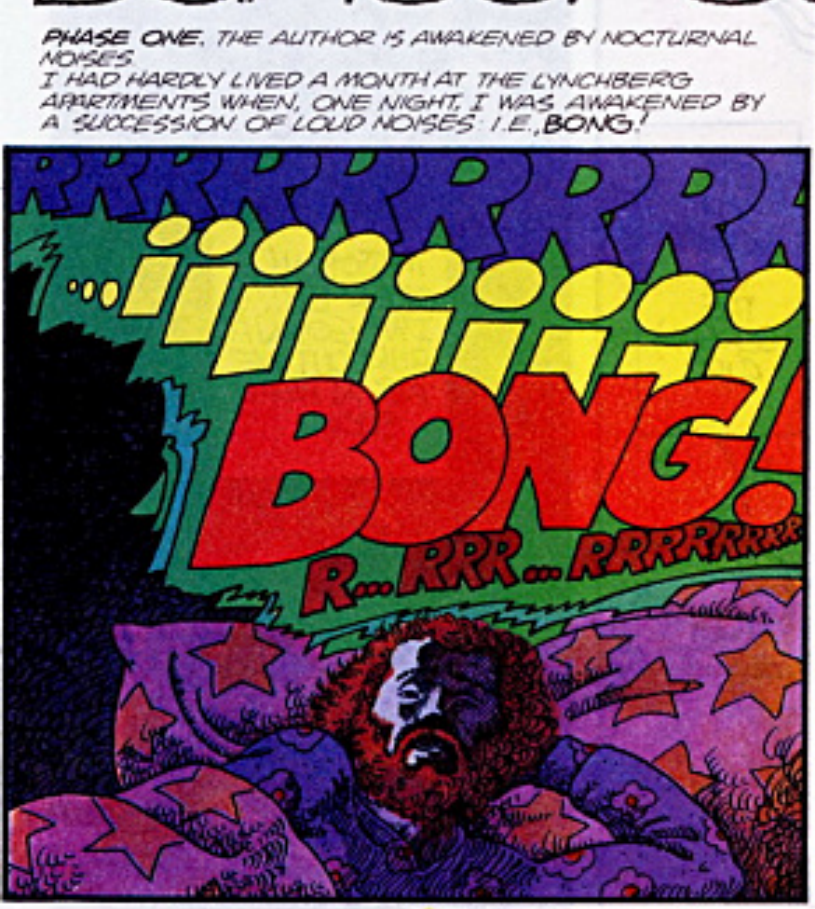

RED-BEARD! ONE THOUSAND PORTHOLES ARE PIERCED WITH ONE THOUSAND BLOWS FROM THE SABRE! THE VALIANT PIRATE LIES ON THE SHIP'S BRIDGE....
BOOM!? WHERE DID HE GO? I— HE CALLED ME A LUMP, DID YOU HEAR THAT, DLEE? A LUMP! WELL, AS SOON AS HE ARRIVES AT CASSIOP WE'LL HAVE THAT OUT! DLEE, MAKE A NOTE OF THAT!
STILL NOTHING! DLEE! SEE IF YOU CAN FIND MOINAR AT THE G.I.M.- I'VE GOT A QUESTION FOR HIM!
RED-BEARD, TERROR OF THE SEVEN SEAS..CR... 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,S.S. STARBOARD 12, 13...
CRRF712 DEAD AS A HERO VW...
FROZEN WAVES FROM THE OCEAN WILL BE HIS LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA
30 A
POUT POUT
SH!
3


OOOH!... MY HEAD! BUT WHERE AM I???
...LA LA LAST RESTING PLACE... HOIST THE JIB... STARBOARD JIB... FBZB 12345 6789101 1RE14 15 16 17 B19 20 21 COMMERCIAL INTERGALACTIC TRANS POR POR POR ZZZZZZZ POR TO PORT ZZZZZZZZ
PORPORTOPORT PORPORTOPOR
WHAT'S GOING ON? WHAT AM I DOING IN THIS BOX?
23


CUT THE GAG, MAJOR V!
BOOMY. HAS HE GONE AND GOTTEN DRUNK, OR WHAT? WHAT'S GOING ON?
I'VE GOT MOINAR ON THE SCREEN, SIR!
MAJOR V! OPEN UP!!! I'M GONNA RUN OUT OF AIR IN HERE SOON...
AH, MOINAR! YOU'RE THE LICENSED TECHNO FROM G.I.M. FOR CASSIOP, RIGHT? GOOD! AND YOU SOLD ME THAT CEREBELLUM, MAJOR V, DID YOU NOT? YES! WELL, I HAVE JUST ONE QUESTION ABOUT IT—CAN THE MAJOR V BREAK DOWN?
MAJOR V! IT'S ME... BOOMY! UH... RED BEARD, I MEAN! OPEN UP!!!
THAT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE, SIR!... I FIXED IT MYSELF!
END

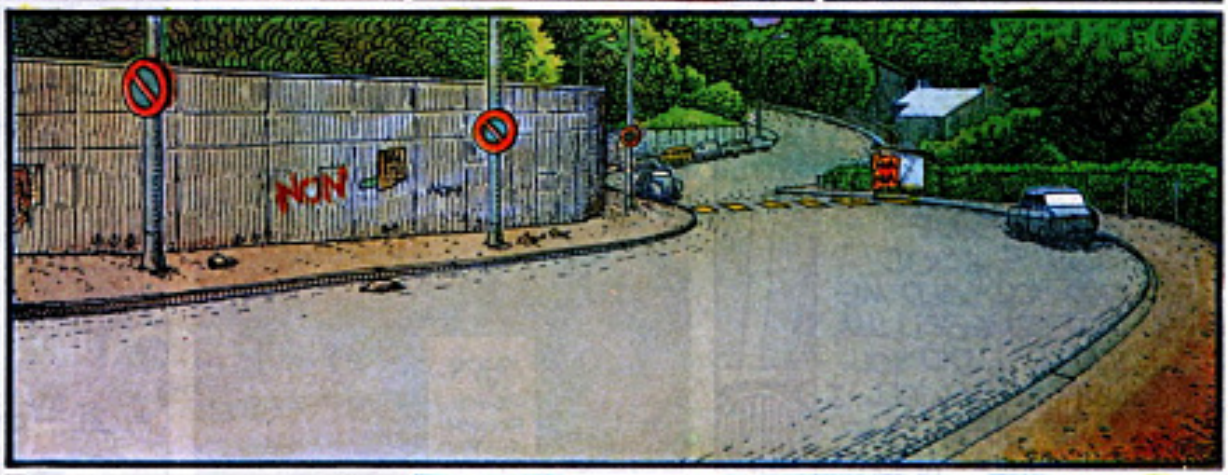
Dangerous Curve

PHASE ONE. THE AUTHOR IS AWAKENED BY NOCTURNAL NOISES.
I HAD HARDLY LIVED A MONTH AT THE LYNCHBERG APARTMENTS WHEN, ONE NIGHT, I WAS AWAKENED BY A SUCCESSION OF LOUD NOISES: I.E., **BONG!**



SOON AFTERWARD, I FELL ASLEEP AGAIN, SNUG AS A BUG.

I MUST EXPLAIN ABOUT THIS WICKED CURVE. IT'S VERY BUMPY AND VERY NARROW AS IT DESCENDS, AND IT BECOMES EVEN WORSE AT THE END OF IT'S COURSE. SO, AT NIGHT, PEOPLE UNKNOWINGLY GO SPEEDING ALONG, ALL TOO QUICKLY. **RRRRRR**... THEY SKID... THERE'S NO TRACTION, SO, A GOOD SLAM OF THE BRAKES, YA LOSE CONTROL... AND **BONG!** THERE IS ALWAYS A PARKED CAR TO INTERCEPT YOU... THIS IS WHAT I HAVE TO LOOK FORWARD TO!

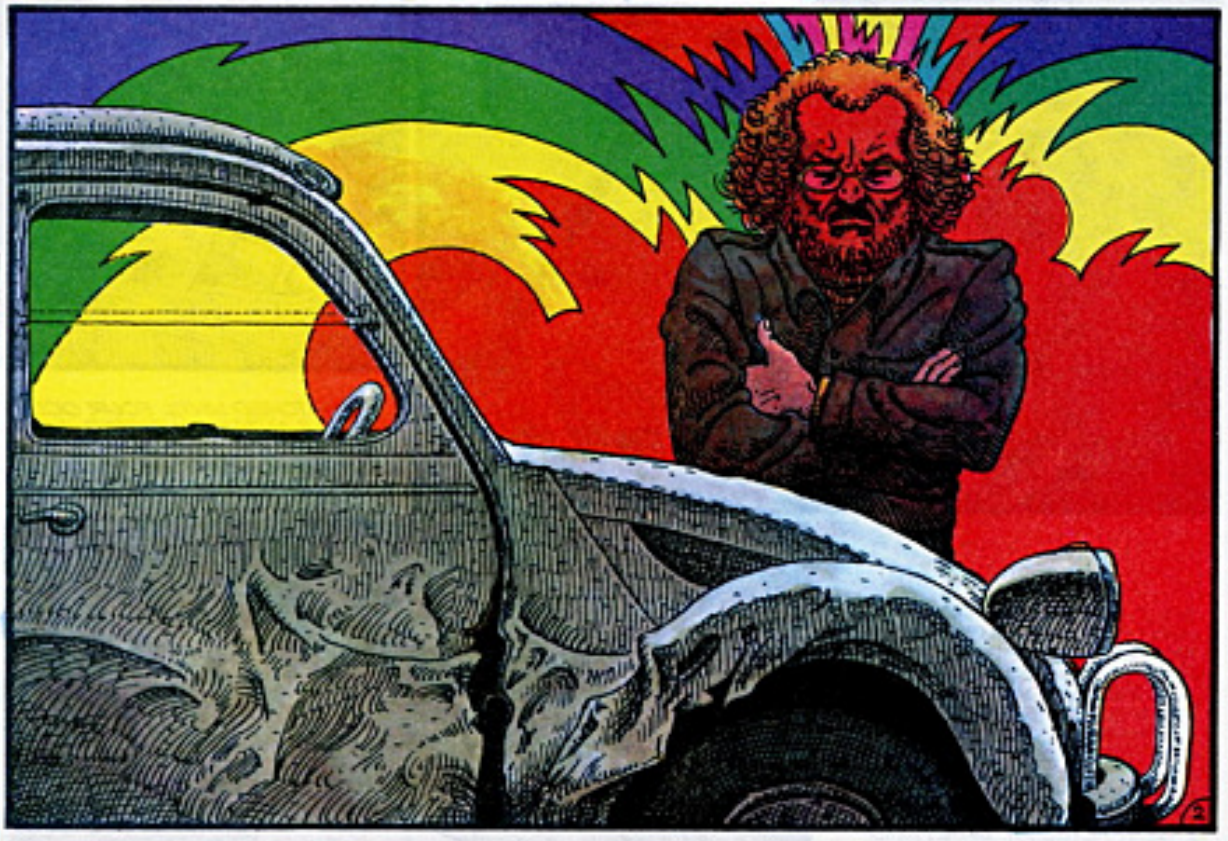


ABOUT A MONTH LATER, I WAS AWAKENED AGAIN UNDER SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT THIS TIME A DOUBLE **BONG** SOUNDED. THIS LED ME TO ASSUME THAT THE DRIVER HAD BOUNCED OFF OF ONE PARKED CAR ONLY TO COLLIDE WITH ANOTHER. I SAT IN MY ROOM AND LAUGHED. WHAT COULD I DO? I REGRETTED NOT WITNESSING THE "SHOW." EVEN THOUGH THE CURVE IS PRACTICALLY AGAINST MY FRONT DOOR, A CLEAR VIEW IS BLOCKED BY A FEW TREES. IN ANY EVENT, THE NEXT MORNING, I VERIFIED THE ACCURACY OF MY DEDUCTIONS— TWO DENTED CARS! THE OWNERS WERE REALLY PISSED OFF!

AS SOON AS I HEARD THE **BONG!** I PULLED ON MY PANTS AND WENT OUT TO TAKE A LOOK. BUT IN THE TIME IT TOOK ME TO GO DOWNSTAIRS AND RUN TO THE ROAD, THE CAR HAD ALREADY SPLIT, LIKE SO MANY TIMES BEFORE.

WHILE GOING BACK UP TO MY FLAT, I BEGAN TO PONDER: I WAS STILL FASCINATED BY THE FREQUENCY AND THE SIMILARITY OF THE ACCIDENTS ...BUT THE FORM OF THE CURVE EXPLAINED A LOT OF THINGS. I BECAME TOO TIRED TO THINK. SCREECHING METAL WAS NOT ABOUT TO PREVENT ME FROM SLEEPING!

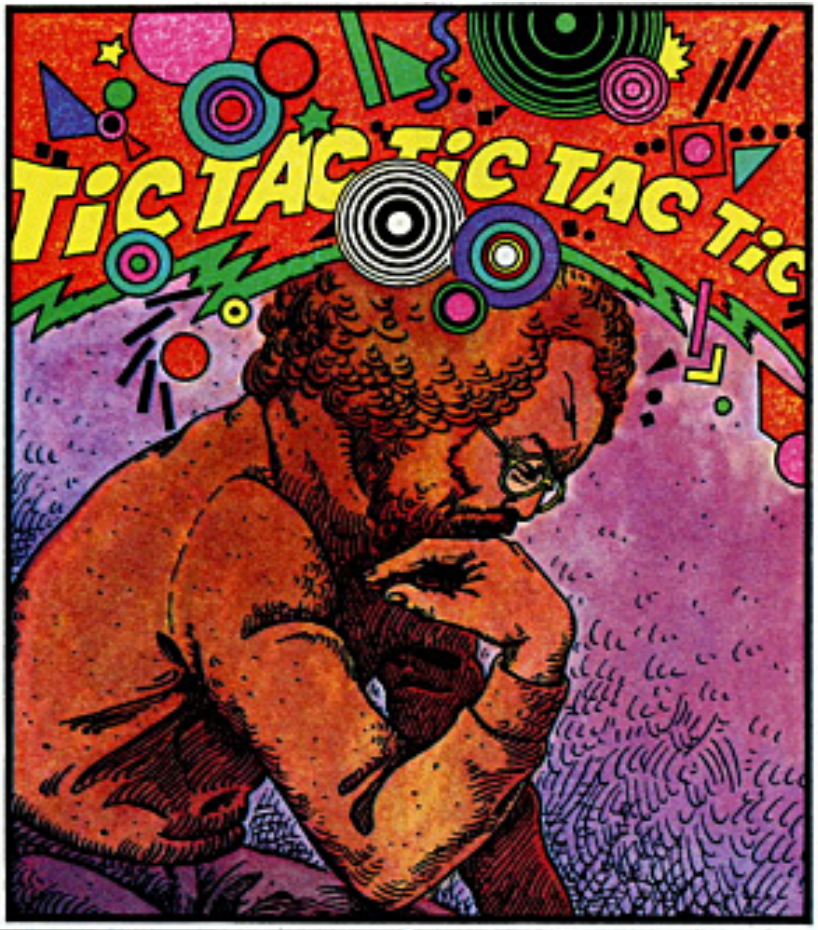
PHASE TWO. THE AUTHOR, BEING PERSONALLY INVOLVED, HAD HIS CURIOSITY PIQUED. THE FOLLOWING ACCIDENT, WHICH WAS ABOUT A MONTH OR SO LATER, HAD ME IN STITCHES. I NEARLY WET MY PANTS!



THE FOLLOWING MORNING I WAS FLABBERGASTED TO SEE THAT IT WAS MY LIL COUPE THAT HAD TAKEN THE BEATING. GOOD GOD! ONE WHOLE SIDE BASHED IN! I WAS FURIOUS! ... PLEASE UNDERSTAND MY SITUATION! I DON'T LIKE ANY CARS WHATSOEVER. MY RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM IS BARELY POLITE. I GIVE MINE THE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF CARE, JUST SO IT HOLDS UP. I DON'T USE IT VERY OFTEN. I PREFER TO WALK, TO TAKE THE OVERNIGHT TRAIN OR EVEN A HORSE. SO, IF I WAS MAD, IT WAS BECAUSE I KNOW LOTS OF BETTER WAYS TO SPEND MY MONEY THAN AT THE MECHANIC'S! SUFFICE IT TO SAY, IT HAD TO BE REPAIRED.

NOW THAT I'M PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN THIS SAGA, I'VE BEGUN TO THINK SERIOUSLY ABOUT ALL OF THIS CRAZINESS. AS SOON AS I GATHERED ALL OF THE FACTS TOGETHER, THE CONCLUSION WAS A CINCH:
- A MONTH BETWEEN ACCIDENTS.
- SAME TIME, SAME PLACE.
- SAME PUFFING FROM THE MOTOR.
- THE HIT-AND-RUN DRIVER NEVER STOPS.

...NO DOUBT ABOUT IT! IT'S THE SAME DRIVER EVERY TIME! EACH MONTH THE SAME DRIVER COLLIDES WITH A PARKED CAR AT THE CORNER OF THE LYNCHBERG APARTMENTS. WHO? WHY? IT DOESN'T STAND TO REASON! IS HE AN ALCOHOLIC WHO GOES OUT AND TIPS A FEW EVERY MONTH ON PAYDAY? A MECHANIC CONJURING UP SOME MORE BUSINESS? OR JUST YOUR RUN-OF-THE-MILL MANIAC? AT ANY RATE, IT WAS SOME UNUSUAL PERSON WHOM I DESPERATELY WANTED TO SEE CLOSE UP, PARTIALLY 'CAUSE I'M ANGRY, BUT MOSTLY OUT OF CURIOSITY. AND, MAYBE ALSO FOR THE LITTLE FEELING OF COMPLICITY...



PHASE 3. THE AUTHOR, NO LONGER YIELDING TO HIS CONTEMPLATIVE NATURE, DECIDES TO TAKE ACTION!

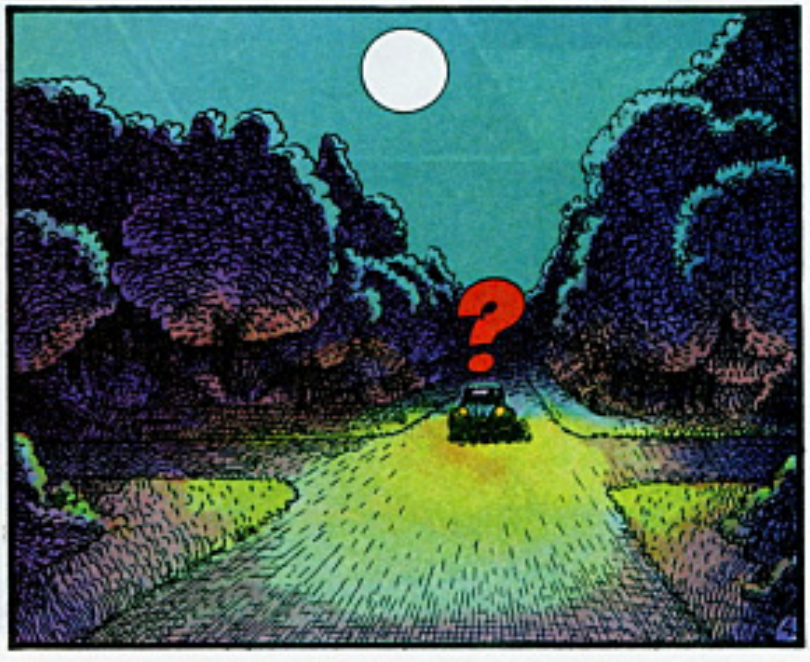
I FINALIZED MY PLANS: THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY AFTER MY COUPE WAS WASTED, I STRATEGICALLY HID BEHIND MY STEERING WHEEL AT THE TOP OF THE CURVE, OFF A BIT, MIND YOU, SO I WOULDN'T GET IN THE WAY, AND I WAITED FOR HIM...

TK-FLAST
BRRR

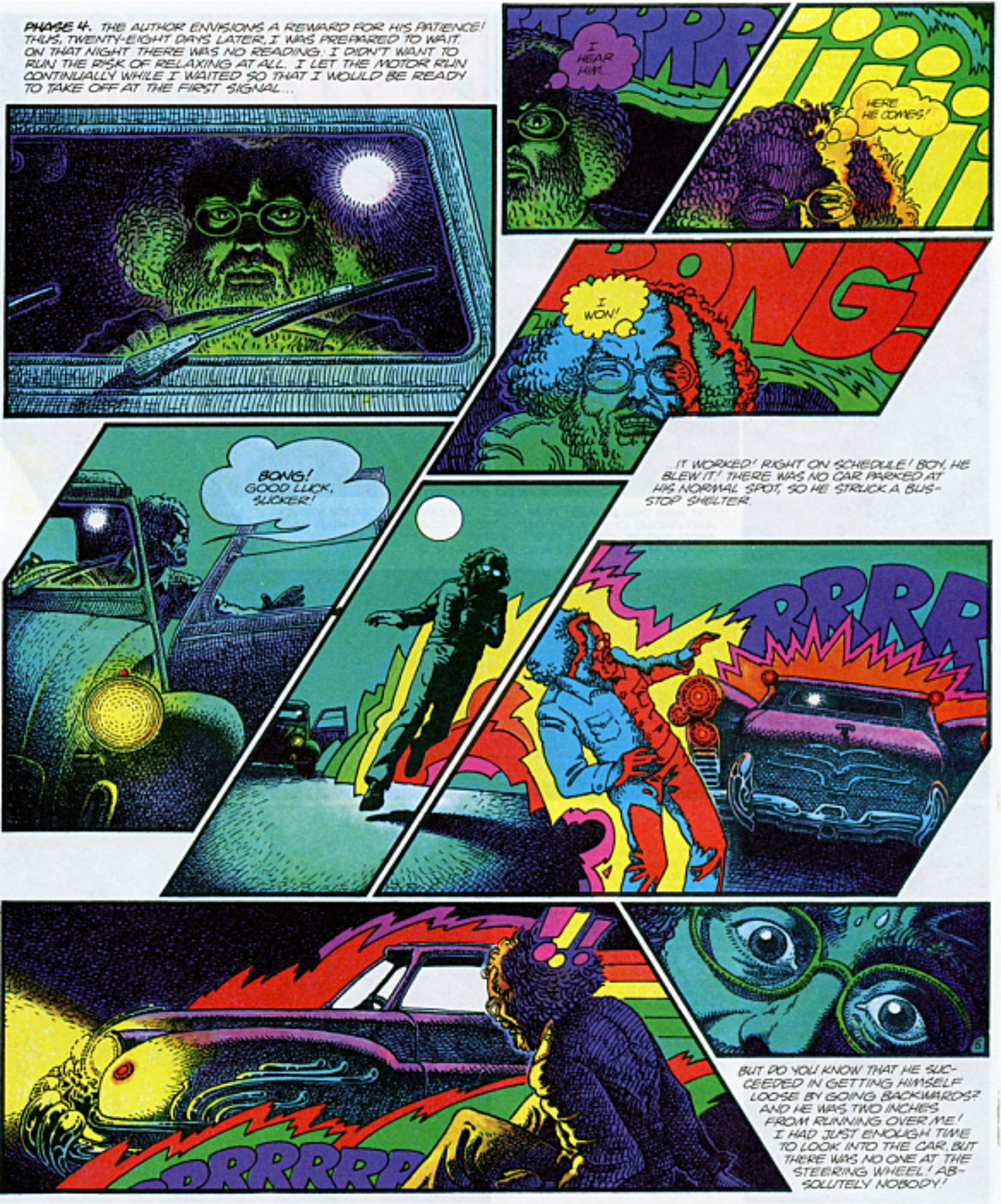
THE NEXT NIGHT, THOUGH EXHAUSTED, I FELT READY TO TAKE MY POST AGAIN. WITH MY PROVISIONS BY MY SIDE I SAT AND WAITED... AGAIN.

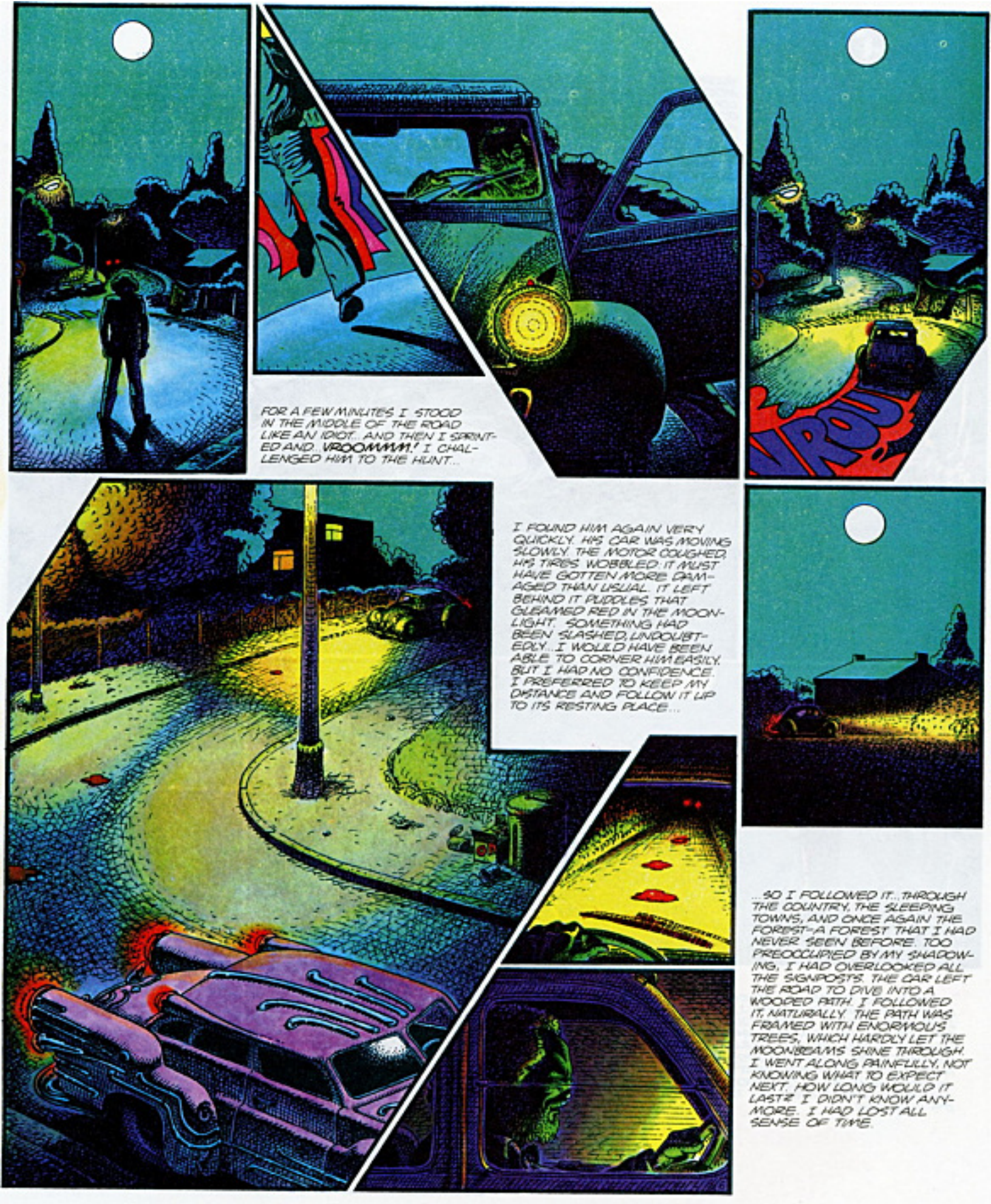
...IT WAS THE **BONG!** THAT WOKE ME UP!...THE DRIVER STRUCK AND DROVE OFF IN THE TIME IT TOOK FOR ME TO SHAKE MYSELF AWAKE. BY THE TIME I STARTED UP MY COLD MOTOR, HE HAD DISAPPEARED INTO THE DISTANCE!

TWENTY YARDS FARTHER ON, I COULD SEE HIS HEADLIGHTS. I TRIED TO CATCH UP WITH HIM, BUT LOST HIM AT AN INTERSECTION AT HOLLYWOOD AND VINE. I COULDN'T SEE HIS LIGHTS ANYMORE. WHAT TURN SHOULD I TAKE? I LET IT DROP, FIGURING I COULD PUT IT OFF UNTIL THE FOLLOWING MONTH. I NOTED THE HOUR AND THE DATE. ONE INTERESTING POINT WAS THAT THE MOON WAS FULL. INDEED, EVERYONE KNOWS THAT A FULL MOON HAS A DANGEROUS INFLUENCE ON CERTAIN PSYCHOPATHS. ASSUMING THAT THIS MANIAC WAS ONE OF THOSE, I HAD INCENTIVE ENOUGH TO TAKE UP WHERE I HAD LEFT OFF, EXACTLY TWENTY-EIGHT DAYS LATER. WITH ALL OF THIS INFORMATION I COULDN'T HELP OUTSMARTING HIM!

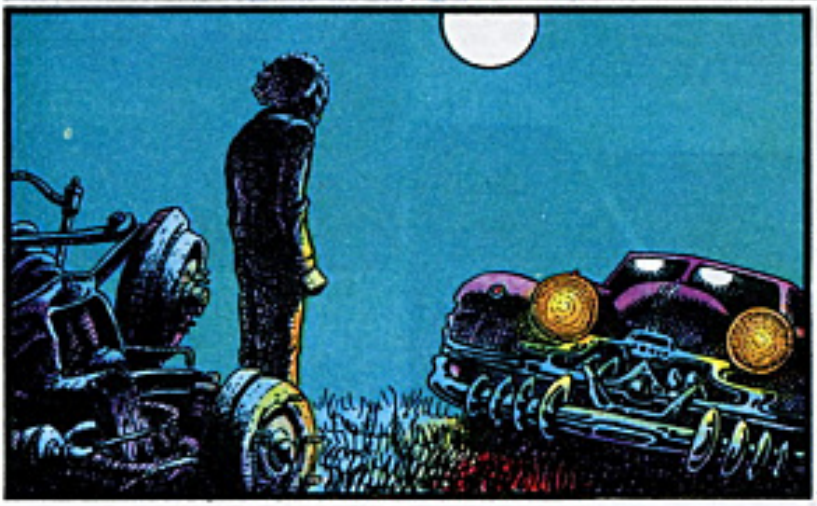


PHASE 4. THE AUTHOR ENVISIONS A REWARD FOR HIS PATIENCE! THUS, TWENTY-EIGHT DAYS LATER, I WAS PREPARED TO WAIT. ON THAT NIGHT THERE WAS NO READING. I DIDN'T WANT TO RUN THE RISK OF RELAXING AT ALL. I LET THE MOTOR RUN CONTINUALLY WHILE I WAITED SO THAT I WOULD BE READY TO TAKE OFF AT THE FIRST SIGNAL...


I HEAR HIM...
HERE HE COMES!
I WON!
BONG!
BONG! GOOD LUCK, SUCKER!
...IT WORKED! RIGHT ON SCHEDULE! BOY, HE BLEW IT! THERE WAS NO CAR PARKED AT HIS NORMAL SPOT, SO HE STRUCK A BUS-STOP SHELTER.
BUT DO YOU KNOW THAT HE SUCCEEDED IN GETTING HIMSELF LOOSE BY GOING BACKWARDS? AND HE WAS TWO INCHES FROM RUNNING OVER ME! I HAD JUST ENOUGH TIME TO LOOK INTO THE CAR, BUT THERE WAS NO ONE AT THE STEERING WHEEL! ABSOLUTELY NOBODY!


FOR A FEW MINUTES I STOOD IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD LIKE AN IDIOT... AND THEN I SPRINTED AND... VROOMMM! I CHALLENGED HIM TO THE HUNT...
VROOM
I FOUND HIM AGAIN VERY QUICKLY. HIS CAR WAS MOVING SLOWLY. THE MOTOR COUGHED. HIS TIRES WOBBLED. IT MUST HAVE GOTTEN MORE DAMAGED THAN USUAL. IT LEFT BEHIND IT PUDDLES THAT GLEAMED RED IN THE MOONLIGHT. SOMETHING HAD BEEN SLASHED, UNDOUBTEDLY... I WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CORNER HIM EASILY. BUT I HAD NO CONFIDENCE. I PREFERRED TO KEEP MY DISTANCE AND FOLLOW IT UP TO ITS RESTING PLACE...
...SO I FOLLOWED IT... THROUGH THE COUNTRY, THE SLEEPING TOWNS, AND ONCE AGAIN THE FOREST—A FOREST THAT I HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE. TOO PREOCCUPIED BY MY SHADOWING, I HAD OVERLOOKED ALL THE SIGNPOSTS. THE CAR LEFT THE ROAD TO DIVE INTO A WOODED PATH. I FOLLOWED IT, NATURALLY. THE PATH WAS FRAMED WITH ENORMOUS TREES, WHICH HARDLY LET THE MOONBEAMS SHINE THROUGH. I WENT ALONG PAINFULLY, NOT KNOWING WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT. HOW LONG WOULD IT LAST? I DIDN'T KNOW ANYMORE... I HAD LOST ALL SENSE OF TIME.

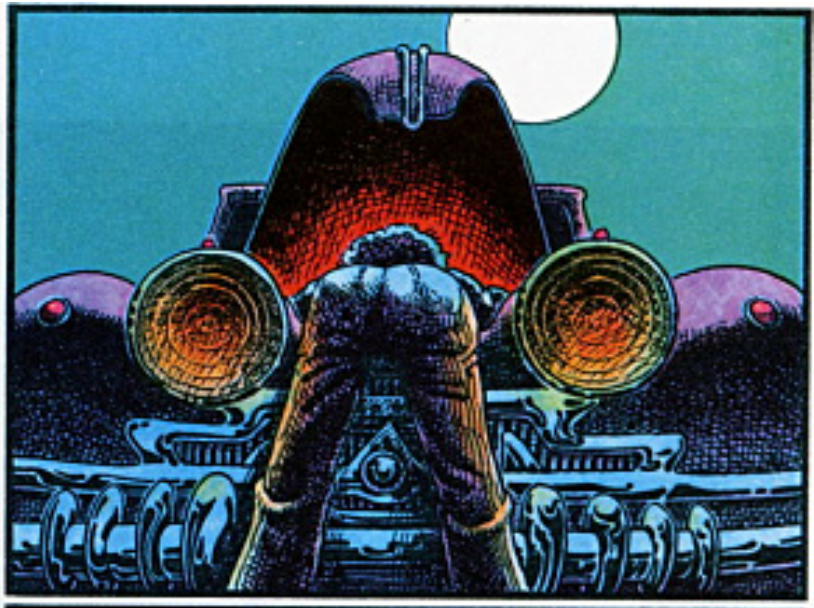
SUDDENLY, AFTER CROSSING A SOMEWHAT TIGHT GROVE, I SAW A CLEARING, LIT BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON. THERE, HUNDREDS OF CARS, ALL DIFFERENT KINDS, AND ALL AGES, LAY HAPHAZARDLY, NO LONGER IN USE, A SPECTACLE OF DESOLATION! A SCRAP LOT, HERE, IN THE MIDDLE OF A FOREST? COULDN'T BE. NO ONE HAD PICKED UP THE PIECES... NO ONE HAD COMPRESSED THE WRECKS TO FORM AVANT-GARDE SCULPTURES. CERTAIN BODIES WERE VERY DENTED, THE CHASSIS MARKED WITH SCARS—AFTEREFFECTS OF WHAT OLD COMBATS? SOME WERE REDUCED TO A SKELETAL STATE, BUT THAT WAS THE WORK OF TIME ALONE. THE MISSING PIECES LAY THERE IN THE MILDEWED GRASS... A CEMETERY OF CARS, YES, BUT WHAT A WILD CEMETERY!... THE GREAT SECRET OSSUARY WHERE CRAZY CARS CAME TO HIDE THEIR AGONY! BUT HOW?



...AND IT WAS THERE, MY CRAZY CAR, IT'S MOTOR WARM, ITS LIGHTS BLINKING SPORADICALLY, SOMETHING BROKEN WITHIN. I WALKED UP TO IT SLOWLY. QUESTIONS TURNED IN MY HEAD... I PONDERED ON HOW AND WHY AN AUTOMOBILE, IN THE LIGHT OF A FULL MOON, COULD ACQUIRE INDEPENDENCE, PERHAPS EVEN CONSCIOUSNESS. WHERE DID ITS RAGE STEM FROM? (THE WORD "AUTOCRAT" CAME TO MIND, BUT... NO, THAT'S SILLY!) I WANTED TO QUESTION IT, BUT WOULD IT HAVE ANSWERED ME? I HAVE YET TO SEE A CAR TALK, EVEN WHILE IT'S IN AGONY.

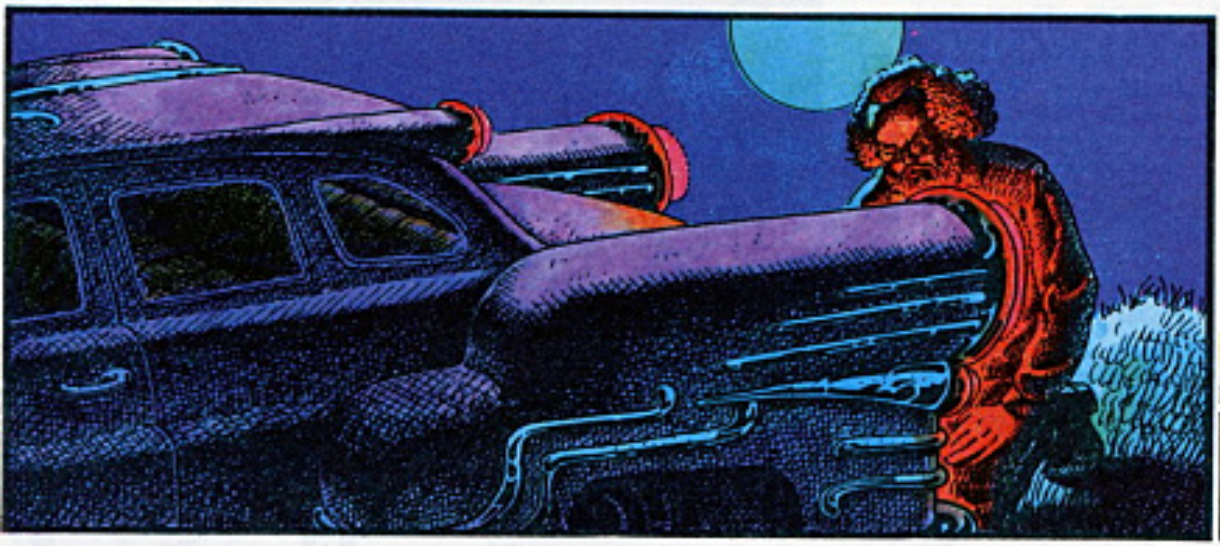
BECAUSE SHE WAS IN PAIN, I DROPPED THE SUBJECT AND TRIED TO HELP HER. I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT MECHANICS, BUT I TOOK MY TOOL KIT AND DOVE INTO HER HOT IRON BODY. I UNTWISTED THINGS HERE AND THERE AND TRIED TO STRAIGHTEN OUT A WIPER. BUT WHAT WORRIED ME THE MOST WAS THE RED LIQUID LEAKING ONTO THE DEWY GRASS. HER LIFE WAS ESCAPING... I PLUGGED THE LEAKS AS BEST I COULD WITH CHEWING GUM. AS A FINISHING TOUCH, I TRIED TO AWAKEN THE CAR WITH A LITTLE LEFTOVER COFFEE, BUT SHE DIDN'T REACT.

SHE FELL INTO A DEEP MECHANICAL SLEEP AGAIN, FOR A MONTH... OR FOREVER. IT WAS ALREADY DAWN. SLOWLY AND SOMEWHAT SADLY I WENT HOME...



EVERY NIGHT WITH A FULL MOON FOR MONTHS TO FOLLOW, I WENT BACK TO SEE HER. I WARMED HER WITH A FIRE OF BRANCHES, AND FOR HOURS, WE DREAMED UNDER THE MOON. SHE WASN'T DEAD, BUT SHE COULD NO LONGER MOVE. A LOUD RUMBLING SOUNDED FROM HER CHASSIS, RAISING ITS WHEELS UP FROM THE SOIL.

PHASE 5. THE AUTHOR, FACED WITH HIS RESPONSIBILITIES, DISPLAYS HIS FAMILY SPIRIT! NOW NINE MONTHS HAVE GONE BY SINCE THE NIGHT OF OUR MEETING. THAT NIGHT, OUR SON WAS BORN. I HELPED HER BRING HIM OUT FROM THE EXHAUST PIPE AND I CARED FOR HIM AS BEST I COULD. HE LOOKS MORE LIKE HIS MOTHER, WITH JUST A BIT OF ME AROUND THE DIMMERS! SHE, SHE COULDN'T RESIST THE BIRTH, BUT THEN SHE DIED; HER BATTERIES WERE COMPLETELY GONE. NOW SHE CAN SLEEP PEACEFULLY. THE LITTLE ONE WILL GROW QUICKLY. SOON HE'LL BE ABLE TO TAKE HER PLACE ON THE ROADS DURING A FULL MOON. AND ME? WELL, I'LL GO WITH HIM, OF COURSE.



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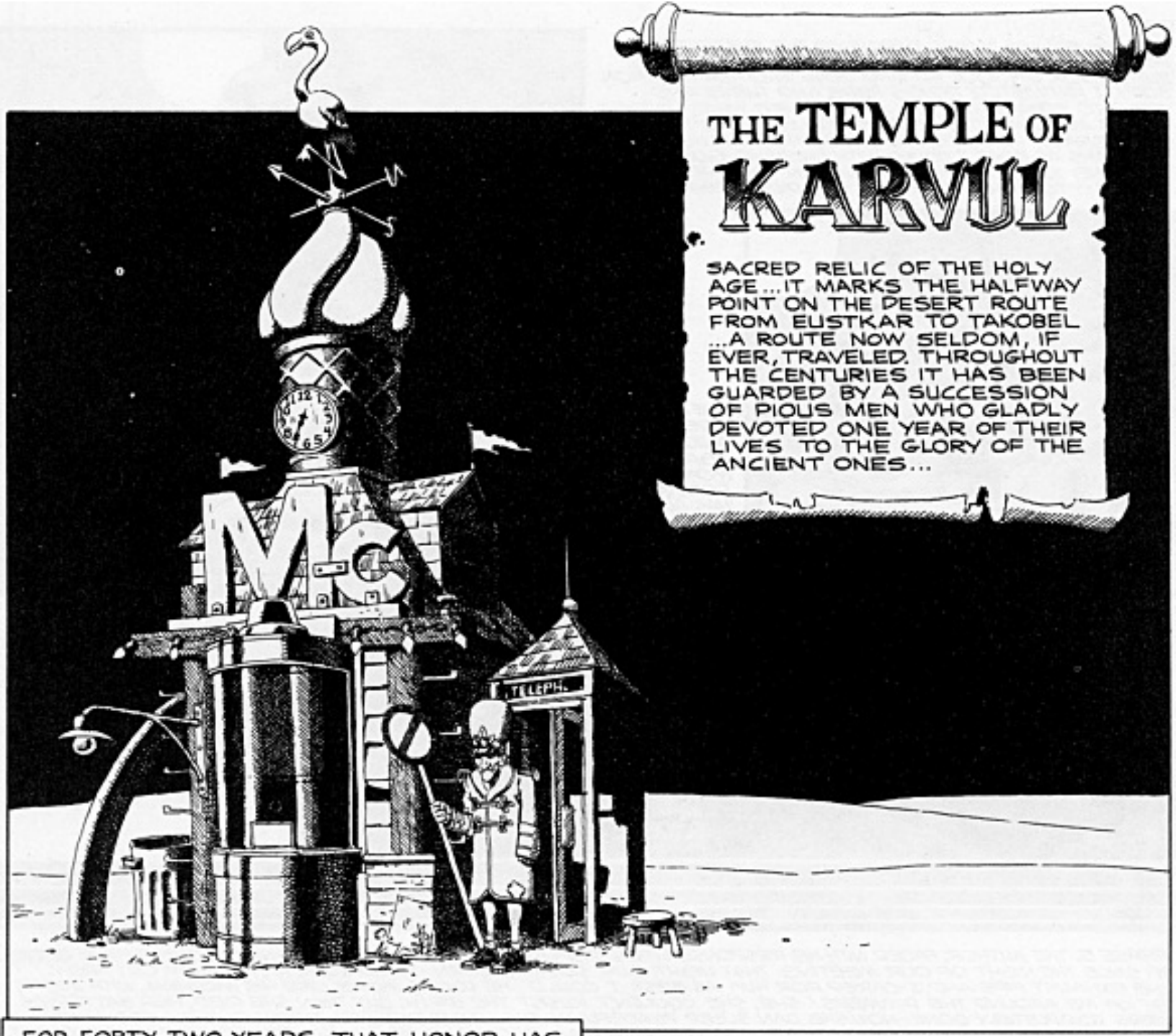

THE TEMPLE OF
KARVUL
SACRED RELIC OF THE HOLY AGE...IT MARKS THE HALFWAY POINT ON THE DESERT ROUTE FROM EUSTKAR TO TAKOBEL ...A ROUTE NOW SELDOM, IF EVER, TRAVELED. THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES IT HAS BEEN GUARDED BY A SUCCESSION OF PIOUS MEN WHO GLADLY DEVOTED ONE YEAR OF THEIR LIVES TO THE GLORY OF THE ANCIENT ONES...
Mc
TELEPH.

FOR FORTY-TWO YEARS THAT HONOR HAS FALLEN TO THIS MAN...FOR THOUGH THE TERM OF HIS ENLISTMENT HAS LONG SINCE PAST, IT IS WRITTEN THAT A GUARD MAY NOT LEAVE HIS POST TILL ANOTHER SHALL TAKE HIS PLACE ...

PISS ON IT!
TELEPH

WHAT'S THAT? COULD IT BE... SOMEONE COMING?
IT IS! AFTER ALL THESE YEARS... IT'S A MAN!
HEY – WHOA! SLOW DOWN! THIS IS IT! THE TEMPLE OF KARVUL! YOU'VE ARRIVED, BOY!
THE GODS WOULD NEVER FORGIVE ME WERE I TO DENY SUCCOR TO A PASSING PILGRIM... I GOT SOME COLD BREW OUT BACK...
JUST STAND HERE WHILE I'M GONE, WILL YA? AND HOLD THIS SIGN FOR ME A SEC...OH, AND THE HAT...
HA-HA! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! YOU FOOL! YOU ACCEPTED THE HOLY HAT AND SCEPTER! I'M FREE!
NOW IT'S YOUR TURN! YOU GUARD THE STUPID TEMPLE TILL THE NEXT IDIOT COMES BY... IN FIFTY YEARS OR SO!
SO LONG, SUCKER... I'M GONE!

?
WHA-?
HEY— COME BACK HERE! YOU CAN'T JUST LEAVE LIKE THAT... WHAT D'YA THINK THIS IS? HEY, GODDAMMIT!
TREACH-EROUS SWINE!
PISS ON IT!
END.

MOON FLIGHT

WE FINISHED THE LAST SERIES OF TESTS WITH THE CENTRIFUGE... EVERYTHING'S READY FOR YOUR DE-PARTURE.
WOW! WHAT A TRIP!
WITH ANOTHER NUCLEAR WAR IMMINENT, THE ARMY HAS ABANDONED ITS SPACE PROGRAM, NOW CONSIDERED SUPERFLUOUS, TO A PRIVATE COMPANY... AND SO, FOR THE FIRST TIME, A CIVIL TEAM-MADE UP OF A MAN, PETE WURTZ, AND A WOMAN, POLKA DOTTS- WILL LAND ON THE MOON.

HOW ABOUT IF I DROP BY YOUR HOUSE, POLKA? WE COULD...

AND GIVE UP ON THE OTHER!
JUST DROP ME OFF, PETE!

WHY DON'T WE SPEND THE LAST NIGHT ON THE PLANET TOGETHER, POLKA? AFTER ALL, IF WE'RE GOING TO SPEND TEN DAYS ALONE ON THE MOON TOGETHER, YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE IN...

YOU REVOLT ME, YOU CHAUVINIST PIG!!
THERE'RE GOING TO BE MILLIONS OF VICTIMS IN THIS WAR, AND ALL YOU THINK ABOUT IS GETTING YOUR ROCKS OFF!

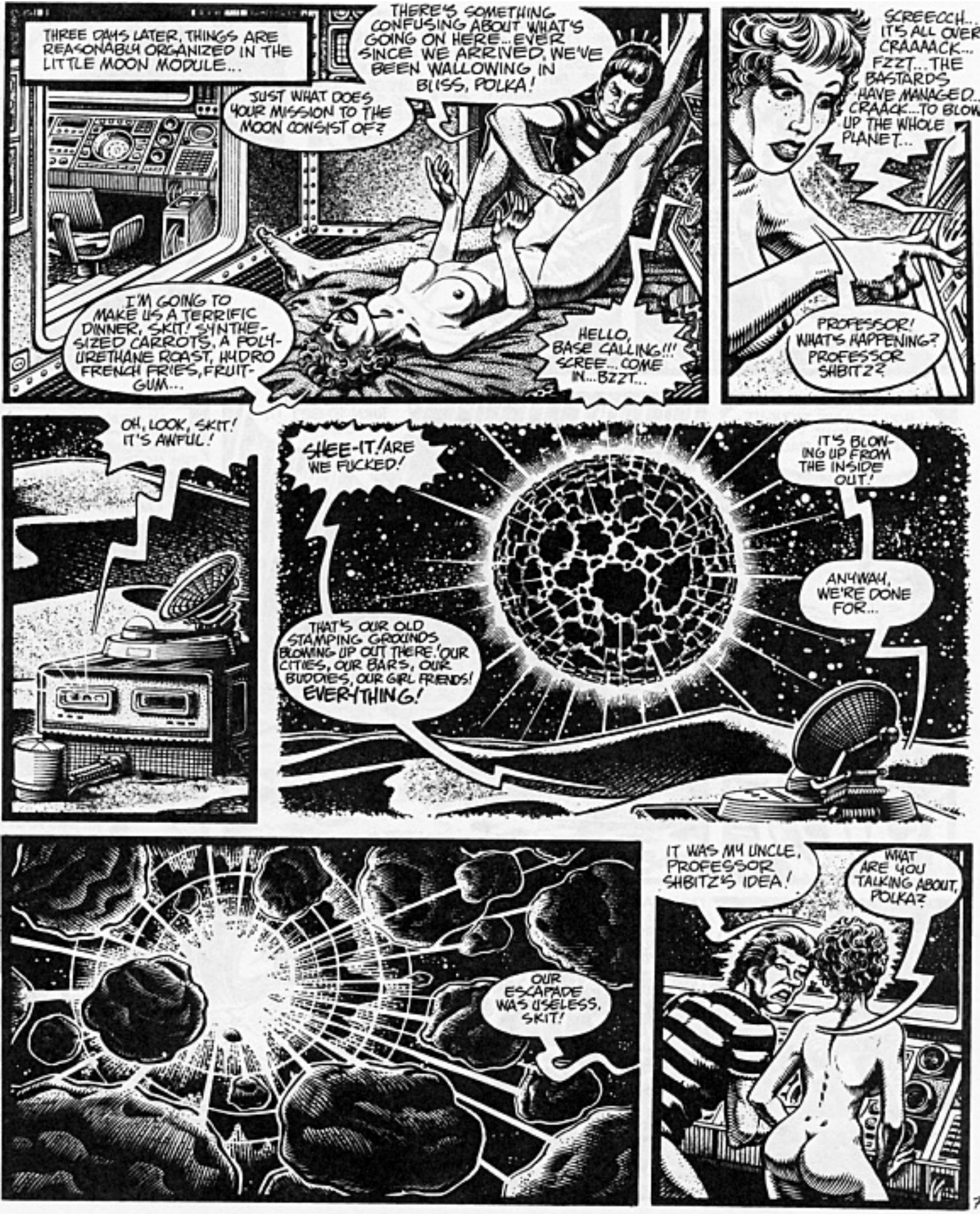
CLICK!
SKIT!
WHAT A JERK THAT GUY IS!
HEY, POLKA, GOT A MATCH?
?
I THOUGHT YOU WERE WITH CAPTAIN RUSTAN'S FLYING CIRCUS!
MMMMMM... I'M SO HAPPY THAT YOU'RE HERE TONIGHT!
WE HAD TO GIVE UP THE AERIAL SHOW... THE WAR, YOU KNOW...
MMM...
C'MERE!
THE TWO FRIENDS CELEBRATE THEIR REUNION IN THE MOST AGREEABLE WAY...
WOWWW!
OOOH! SKIT! IT'S ALWAYS LIKE THE FIRST TIME WITH YOU... SINCE THE VERY FIRST TIME!
I WOULD RATHER GO WITH YOU TO THE MOON THAN WITH THAT DEPRAVED PETE!
YOU CRAZY OR WHAT?!!

NEXT MORNING...
GOOD DAY, MISS DOTT'S DOCTOR MEASLE IS WAITING FOR YOU...
THEY MUST HAVE BEGUN THE COUNTDOWN!
OH, FOLKA! I'VE JUST FINISHED MAKING UP YOUR DRUG KIT... NOW WE CAN BEGIN THE BIO-CHECK-UPS!
THIS IS AN HISTORICAL MOMENT FOR CIVIL ASTRONAUTICS...
HERE ARE DOCTOR MEASLE'S CLOTHES! PUT THEM ON FAST!
3

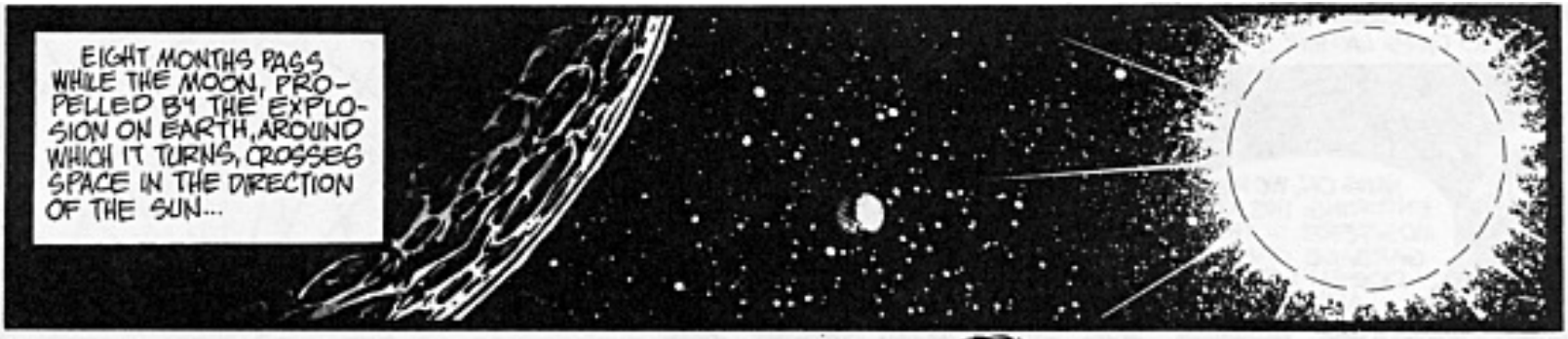
A LITTLE WHILE LATER, IN THE CONTROL ROOM...
'5:20
PROFESSOR SHBITZ?
HERE I AM, POLKA... WE'RE COMPLETING OUR CHECK-OUT OF THAT SCRAP HEAP THAT THE ARMY SOLD US! HOW DID YOUR BIO-CHECKUPS GO? IS PETE THERE?
MMM... YES, PROF... EVERY-THING'S FINE...
JOIN US ON THE GANG-PLANK WHEN YOU'RE READY!
HOWDY, BABE!
IT'S ME, YOUR LOVER BOY, PETE!
IN GOOD SHAPE FOR OUR HONEY-MOON!
IF YOU'VE GOT ANY DOUBTS ABOUT MY BODY, YOU CAN FINGER THE MERCHAN-DISE!
BAAA...
REEL IT BACK IN, PETE, CAUSE YOU'RE NOT GOING WITH ME...
WHA'?? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WHO'S THAT?
HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO MANAGES TO SEND ME INTO SPACE...
...AND HE'S THE ONE I'M GOING TO FLY WITH!
WHAT?! THAT CREEP??
AIEEE!
MMMPH!
CRACK!

DID YOU SEE THAT? I LEVELED THE MEATBALL WITH A SINGLE BLOW!
STOP DREAMING, SKIT! IT WAS THE SHOT I GAVE HIM! HELP ME PUT HIM IN THE CLOSET WITH DOCTOR MEASLE.
OOOH! IS HE HEAVY!
OOH!
HE'LL SLEEP FOR AT LEAST TWO WEEKS, THANKS TO THAT INJECTION!
NOW THAT'S DONE! GET DRESSED QUICKLY! PROFESSOR SKBITZ IS WAITING FOR US!
TELL ME, POLKA, ARE YOU REALLY DOING THIS BECAUSE YOU LIKE MAKING LOVE TO ME?
ISN'T THAT ENOUGH OF A REASON?
A FEW MINUTES LATER ON THE LAUNCH PLATFORM...
HERE THEY ARE, PROF!
UNFORTUNATELY...
THIS WONDERFUL MOMENT IS TARNISHED BY THE HOSTILITIES THAT ARE ABOUT TO BREAK OUT!
WHAT'S THE OUTCOME GOING TO BE, PROFESSOR?
I PREFER NOT TO THINK ABOUT IT, POLKA... I'VE LEARNED, FROM A RELIABLE SOURCE, THAT THE FIRST WAVE OF MISSILES WILL BE LAUNCHED THIS MORNING!
LATER...
POLKA? PETE?
YES, PROF...?
TEN MORE SECONDS TO COUNTDOWN! ALL SYSTEMS GO... 5, 4, 3, 2, 1... BLAST OFF!
AND AT THAT MOMENT...

...THE SHIP BLASTS INTO THE DARKNESS OF SPACE...
SO, POLKA DOTTS, ASTRONAUT; AND SKIT SKAT, HER BUDDY SHOOT TOWARD THE MOON, WHILE A DEADLY WAR BEGINS ON THEIR OWN WORLD..
YOU REALLY KNOW HOW TO FLY THIS GISMO, POLKA?
BASE CALLING...TRAJECTORY CORRECTION 150-95-35... SECOND STAGE CLEAR...ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YES, PROFESSOR... EXCEPT THAT PETE'S RADIO IS BROKEN... I'LL MAINTAIN RADIO CONTACT BY MYSELF...
THEY'RE GOING TO END UP KNOWING THAT I'M NOT PETE...AND WHEN WE GET BACK, THE WELCOME COMMITTEE ISN'T GOING TO BE VERY NICE ABOUT IT!
COOL IT WITH YOUR PARANOIA, SKIT!
I'VE ARRANGED EVERYTHING FOR OUR RETURN!
BASE CALLING... A PERFECT MOON LANDING!
THE MODULE HAS LANDED, AS PLANNED, WITHIN 200 METERS OF POINT 156°...
IS THIS THE MOON?
YOU COMING OR NOT, SKIT?
THIS PLACE DEPRESSES ME! THE LANDSCAPE, THESE HILLS, ALL GRAY AND MONOTONOUS!!
I'M ON THE MOON!
AND I CAN'T EVEN PINCH MYSELF THROUGH THIS GET UP!!


THREE DAYS LATER, THINGS ARE REASONABLY ORGANIZED IN THE LITTLE MOON MODULE...
JUST WHAT DOES YOUR MISSION TO THE MOON CONSIST OF?
THERE'S SOMETHING CONFUSING ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON HERE... EVER SINCE WE ARRIVED, WE'VE BEEN WALLOWING IN BLISS, POLKA!
I'M GOING TO MAKE US A TERRIFIC DINNER, SKIT! SYNTHE-SIZED CARROTS, A POLY-URETHANE ROAST, HYDRO FRENCH FRIES, FRUIT-GUM...
HELLO, BASE CALLING!!! SCREE... COME IN... BZZT...
SCREECCH... IT'S ALL OVER CRAAAACK... FZZT... THE BASTARDS HAVE MANAGED... CRAACK... TO BLOW UP THE WHOLE PLANET...
PROFESSOR! WHAT'S HAPPENING? PROFESSOR SHBITZ?
OH, LOOK, SKIT! IT'S AWFUL!
SHEE-IT! ARE WE FUCKED!
IT'S BLOW-ING UP FROM THE INSIDE OUT!
ANYWAY, WE'RE DONE FOR...
THAT'S OUR OLD STAMPING GROUNDS BLOWING UP OUT THERE! OUR CITIES, OUR BARS, OUR BUDDIES, OUR GIRL FRIENDS! EVERYTHING!
OUR ESCAPADE WAS USELESS, SKIT!
IT WAS MY UNCLE, PROFESSOR SHBITZ'S IDEA!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, POLKA?

HE SAID THAT THE NEXT WAR WOULD BE TOTAL... AND HE REALLY CARED FOR ME...
A MOON MISSION WAS BEING ORGANIZED... AND SINCE HE WAS THE DIRECTOR OF IT...
HE SUGGESTED THAT I TAKE PART IN IT AND STAY ON THE MOON UNTIL HOSTILITIES WERE OVER... BUT I DIDN'T LIKE MY TEAMMATE AT ALL...
SO, MY UNCLE HELPED ME TAKE ALONG SOMEONE ELSE, WHO SUITED ME BETTER!
ME?!
IF YOU HAVE TO CONTINUE THE RACE, BETTER TO DO IT WITH SOMEONE YOU LIKE...
IT'S NICE OF YOU TO HAVE THOUGHT OF ME IN YOUR PLANS TO CONTINUE THE RACE, BUT...
SKIT!! THE DEBRIS FROM THE EXPLOSION!
NOW IT'S OUR TURN TO GET IT, POLKA!
AN HOUR LATER...
INCREDIBLE!! THE MODULE IS BASHED UP, BUT IT MADE IT! LET'S GO LOOK AT THE CAPSULE...
WHAT'S THE USE, SKIT? WE HAVE NOWHERE TO GO, UNLESS WE WANT TO DIE!
DON'T TALK SHIT, POLKA. AS LONG AS WE'RE BREATHING, THERE'S HOPE! THIS HEAP OF TIN'S IN TERRIBLE SHAPE, BUT WE'LL FIX IT UP!
HOW LONG CAN WE HOLD OUT?
IF THE OXYGEN GENERATOR AND THE FOOD SYNTHESIZER HOLD OUT...
BANG! BANG!
...EIGHT TO TEN MONTHS... BUT... WHAT ABOUT AFTERWARDS??


EIGHT MONTHS PASS WHILE THE MOON, PROPELLED BY THE EXPLOSION ON EARTH, AROUND WHICH IT TURNS, CROSSES SPACE IN THE DIRECTION OF THE SUN...

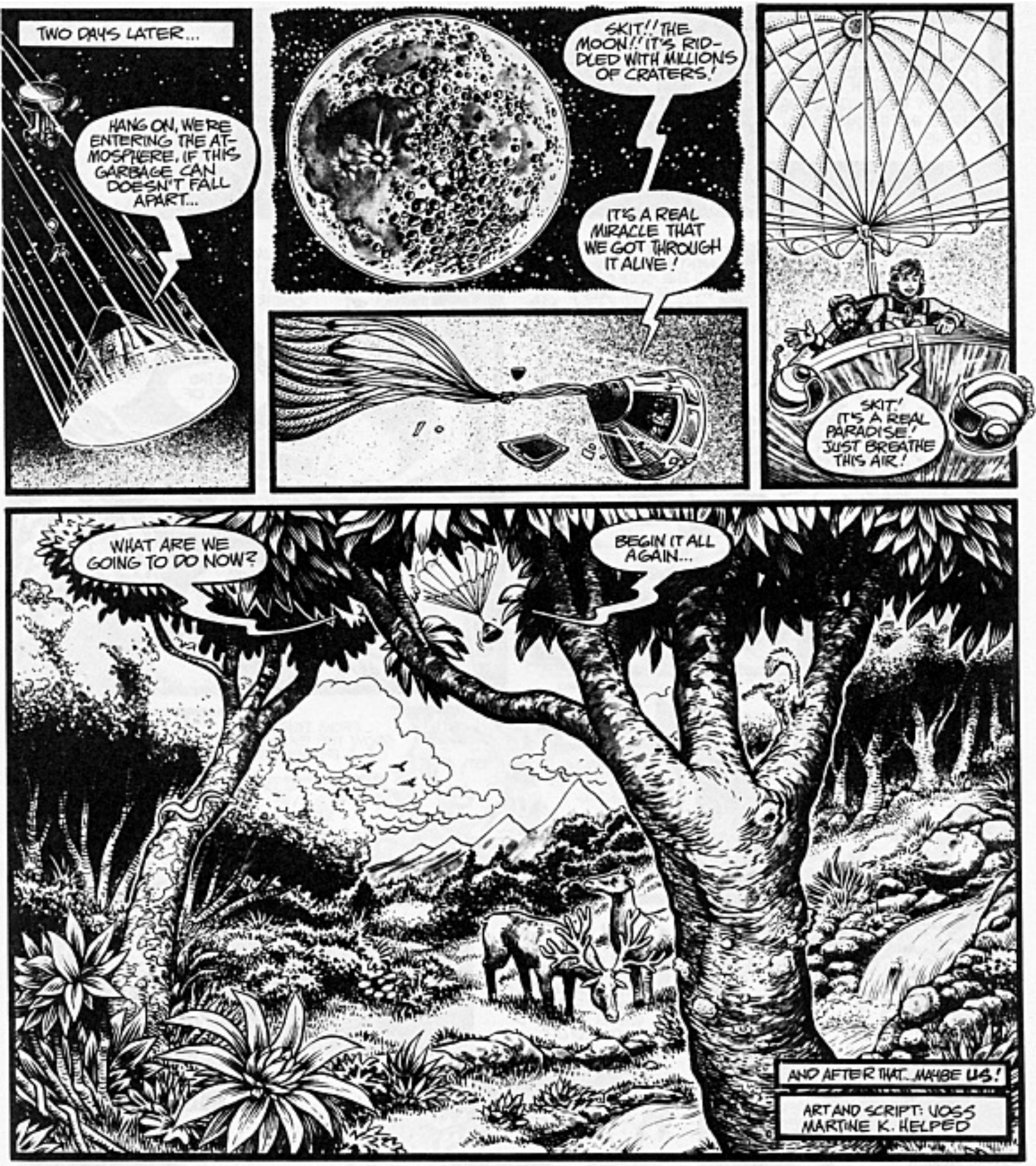
INSIDE THE MOON MODULE, SKIT AND POLKA DIVIDE THEIR TIME AMONG REPAIRING THE CAPSULE, MAKING LOVE, AND ARTIFICIALLY INDUCED SLEEP...
OOOHHH! I THINK YOU WENT A LITTLE HEAVY WITH THE SLEEPING PILLS! WE MUST HAVE SLEPT MORE THAN FIFTY HOURS!
ACCH! WHAT'S THE USE OF WAKING UP?
YOU FINISHED REPAIRING THE CAPSULE... BUT IT'S ONLY GOT THREE DAYS LIFE-SUPPORT LEFT...

THE MOON'S GOING TO FLY RIGHT INTO THE SUN... IT'LL BE ALL OVER SOON...
...FOR THE THREE OF US!
SHUT UP WITH YOUR PROPHECIES, YOU'RE DEPRESSING ME!

OH, SKIT! THE MOON!! LOOK! IT'S PUTTING ITSELF IN ORBIT AROUND TERRA, THE THIRD PLANET IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM!
WE'RE SAVED!!!

A LITTLE WHILE LATER...
THE SPACE WAVES WE'RE PICKING UP...
...FROM TERRA SHOW THE EXISTENCE OF A BIOSPHERE...
...IN WHICH WE CAN SURVIVE!

THEY BLAST OFF TOWARD TERRA (OUR OWN GOOD OLD PLANET, AS YOU MAY HAVE REALIZED), ON BOARD THE SHIP, WHICH SKIP HAS PATCHED UP...

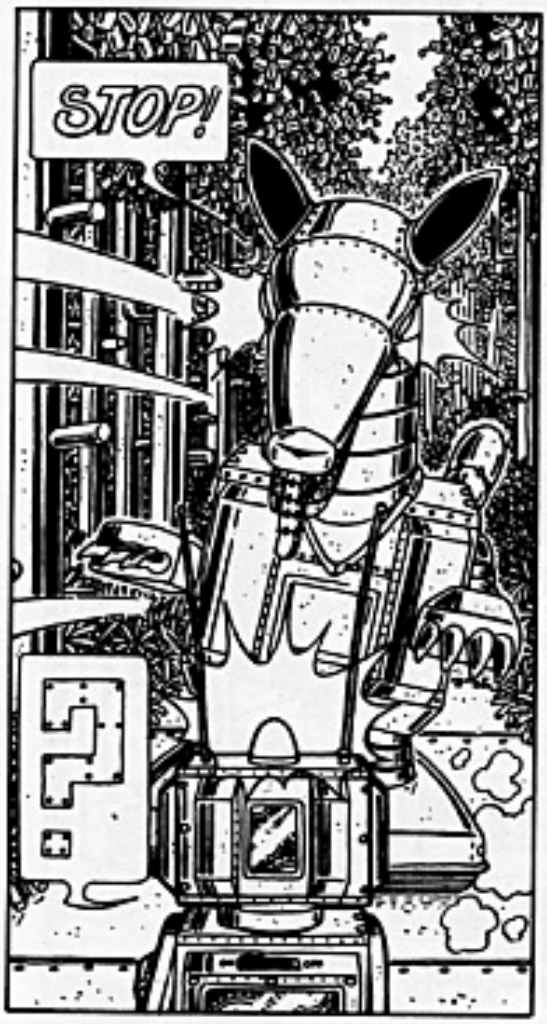

TWO DAYS LATER...
HANG ON, WE'RE ENTERING THE ATMOSPHERE, IF THIS GARBAGE CAN DOESN'T FALL APART...
SKIT!! THE MOON!! IT'S RIDDLED WITH MILLIONS OF CRATERS!
IT'S A REAL MIRACLE THAT WE GOT THROUGH IT ALIVE!
SKIT! IT'S A REAL PARADISE! JUST BREATHE THIS AIR!
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO NOW?
BEGIN IT ALL AGAIN...
AND AFTER THAT... MAYBE US!
ART AND SCRIPT: UOSS
MARTINE K. HELPED

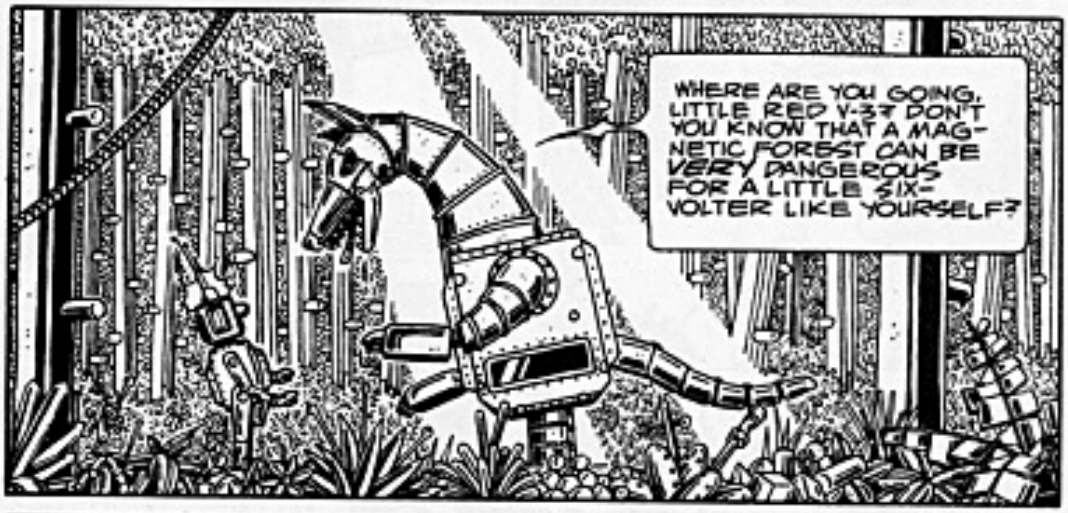
P.S. THE GERMAN ASTRONOMER OLBERS (1758-1840) SUGGESTED IN 1804 THAT AMONG THE LITTLE PLANETS GRAVITATING BETWEEN MARS AND JUPITER, FORMING A SORT OF RING, WAS A UNIQUE PLANET, SMALLER THAN EARTH, WHICH EXPLODED... (THE NEW ASTRONOMY... J.C. PECKER)

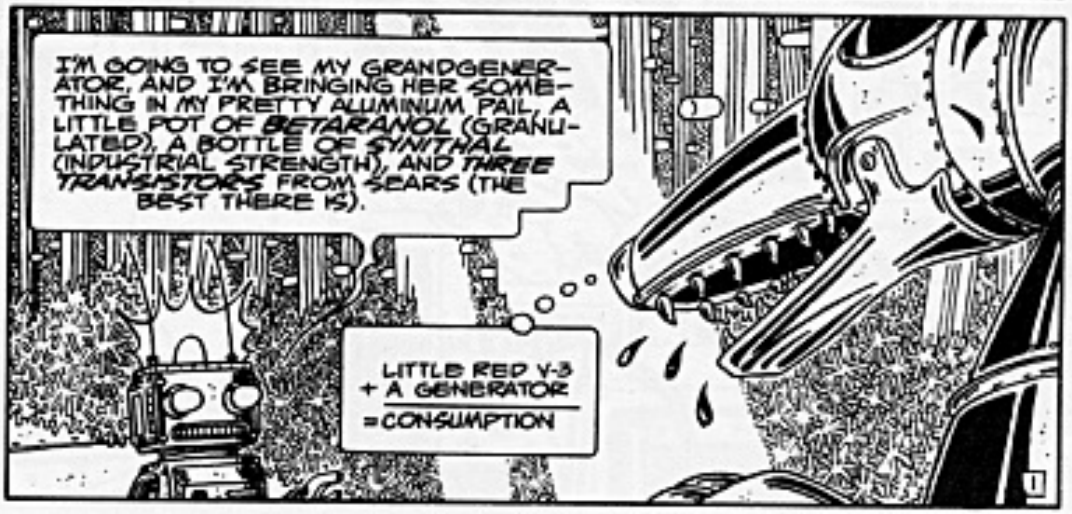
LITTLE RED V-3

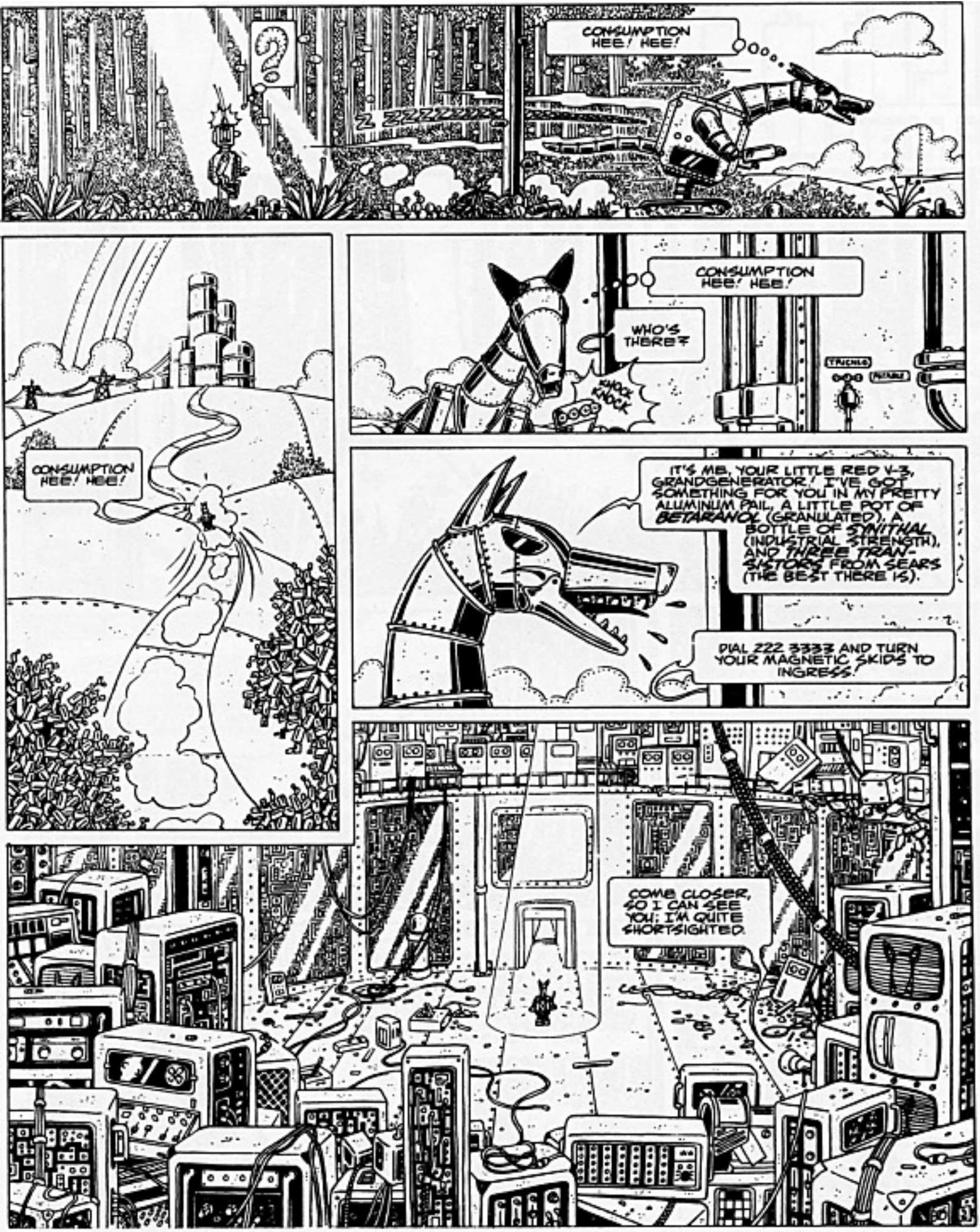
A METALLIC TALE

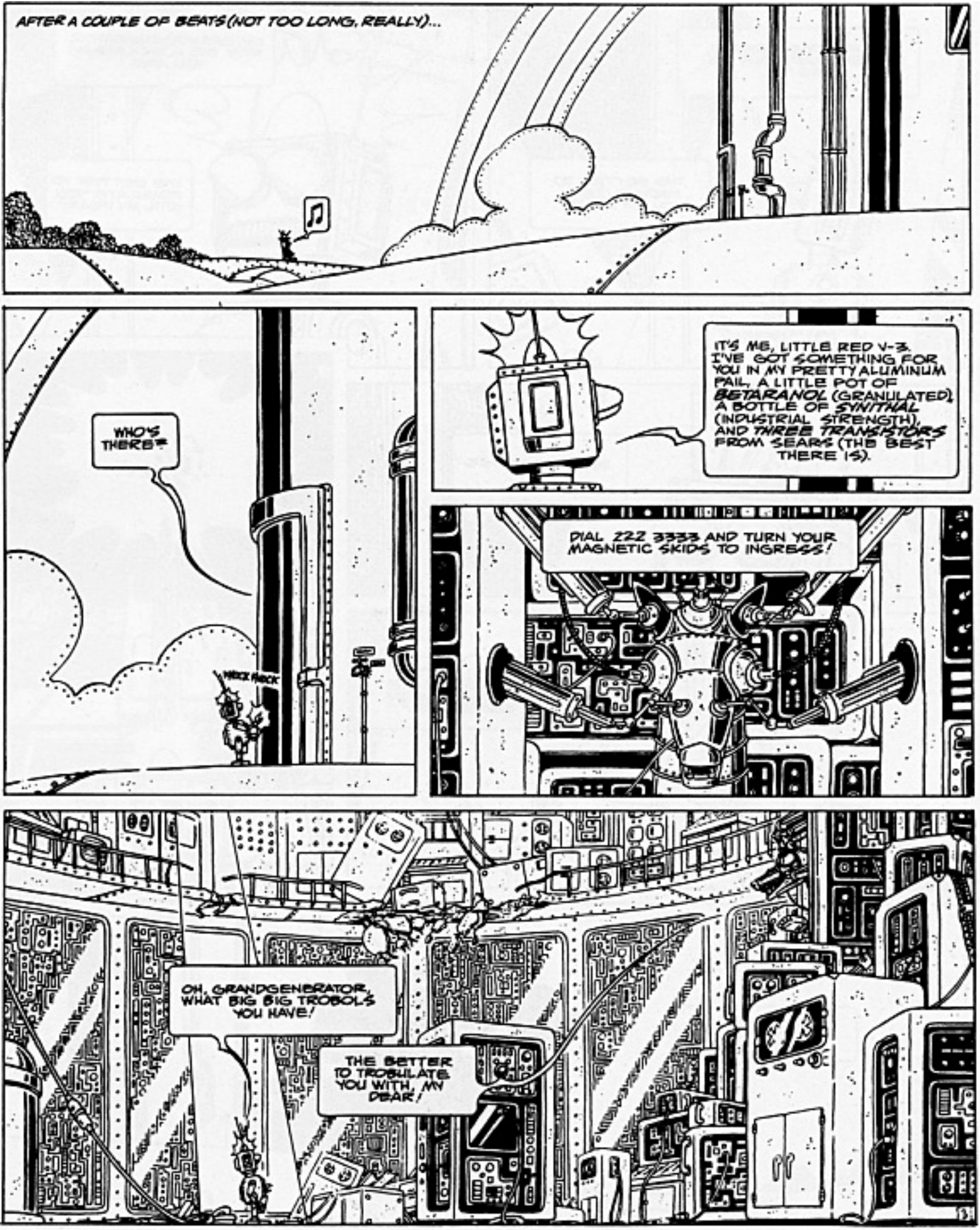
BY HE

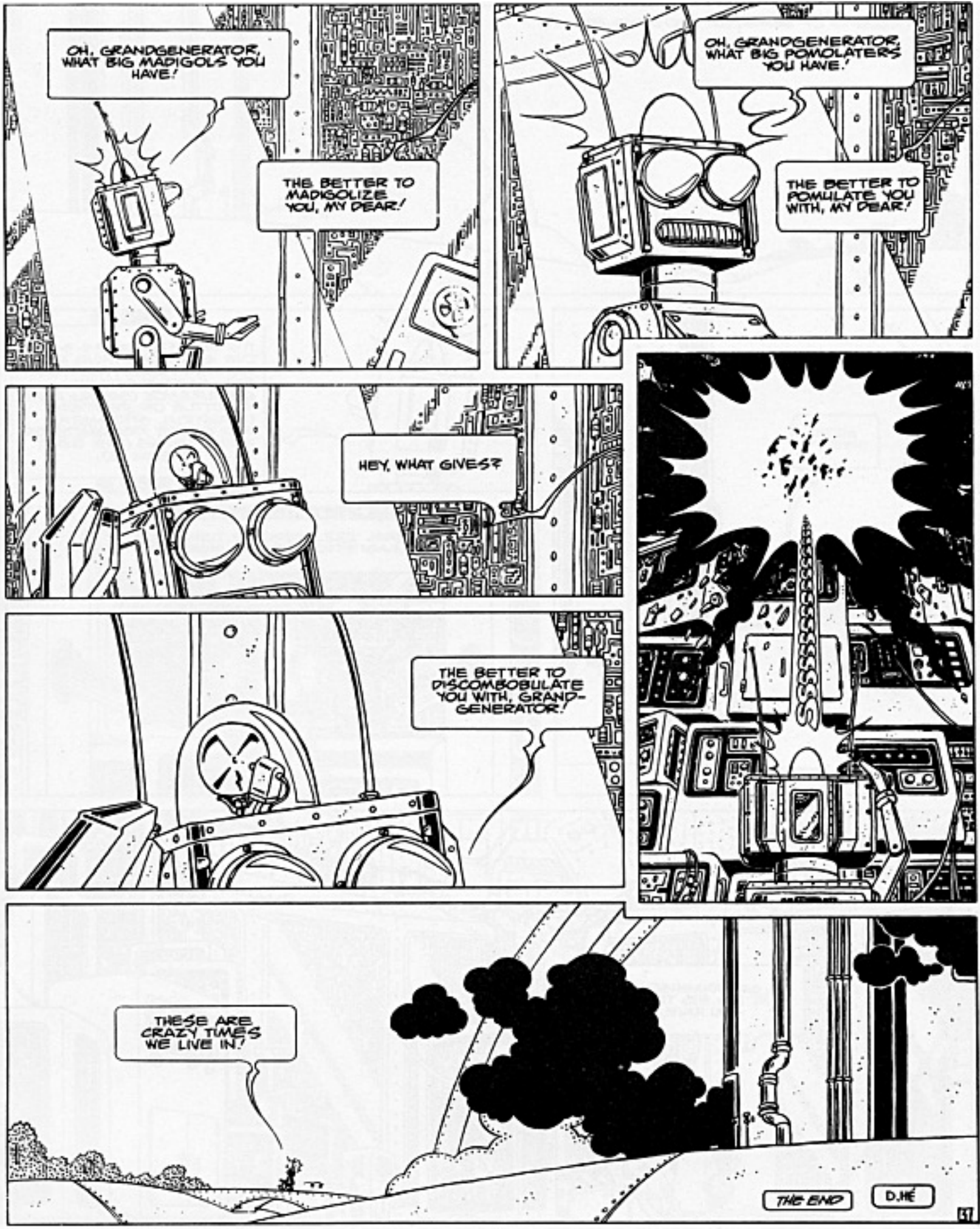



WHERE ARE YOU GOING, LITTLE RED V-3? DON'T YOU KNOW THAT A MAGNETIC FOREST CAN BE VERY DANGEROUS FOR A LITTLE SIX-VOLTER LIKE YOURSELF?


I'M GOING TO SEE MY GRANDGENERATOR, AND I'M BRINGING HER SOMETHING IN MY PRETTY ALUMINUM PAIL, A LITTLE POT OF BETARANOL (GRANULATED), A BOTTLE OF SYNTHAL (INDUSTRIAL STRENGTH), AND THREE TRANSISTORS FROM SEARS (THE BEST THERE IS).
LITTLE RED V-3 + A GENERATOR = CONSUMPTION


?
Z ZZZZZZZZZ
CONSUMPTION HEE! HEE!
CONSUMPTION HEE! HEE!
WHO'S THERE?
KNOCK KNOCK
TRICHLO
PHENOL
CONSUMPTION HEE! HEE!
IT'S ME, YOUR LITTLE RED V-3, GRANDGENERATOR! I'VE GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU IN MY PRETTY ALUMINUM PAIL, A LITTLE POT OF BETARANOL (GRANULATED), A BOTTLE OF SYNITHAL (INDUSTRIAL STRENGTH), AND THREE TRANSISTORS FROM SEARS (THE BEST THERE IS).
DIAL 222 3333 AND TURN YOUR MAGNETIC SKIDS TO INGRESS.
COME CLOSER, SO I CAN SEE YOU; I'M QUITE SHORTSIGHTED.


AFTER A COUPLE OF BEATS (NOT TOO LONG, REALLY)...
WHO'S THERE?
KNOCK KNOCK
IT'S ME, LITTLE RED V-3. I'VE GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU IN MY PRETTY ALUMINUM PAIL, A LITTLE POT OF BETARANOL (GRANULATED), A BOTTLE OF SYNITHAL (INDUSTRIAL STRENGTH), AND THREE TRANSISTORS FROM SEARS (THE BEST THERE IS).
DIAL 222 3333 AND TURN YOUR MAGNETIC SKIDS TO INGRESS!
OH, GRANDGENERATOR, WHAT BIG BIG TROBOLS YOU HAVE!
THE BETTER TO TROBULATE YOU WITH, MY DEAR!


OH, GRANDGENERATOR, WHAT BIG MADIGOLS YOU HAVE!
THE BETTER TO MADIGOLIZE YOU, MY DEAR!
OH, GRANDGENERATOR, WHAT BIG POMOLATERS YOU HAVE!
THE BETTER TO POMULATE YOU WITH, MY DEAR!
HEY, WHAT GIVES?
SSSSSSSSSS
THE BETTER TO DISCOMBOBULATE YOU WITH, GRAND-GENERATOR!
THESE ARE CRAZY TIMES WE LIVE IN!
THE END
D.HE
57

ONLY THE PLITCH! by BILAL

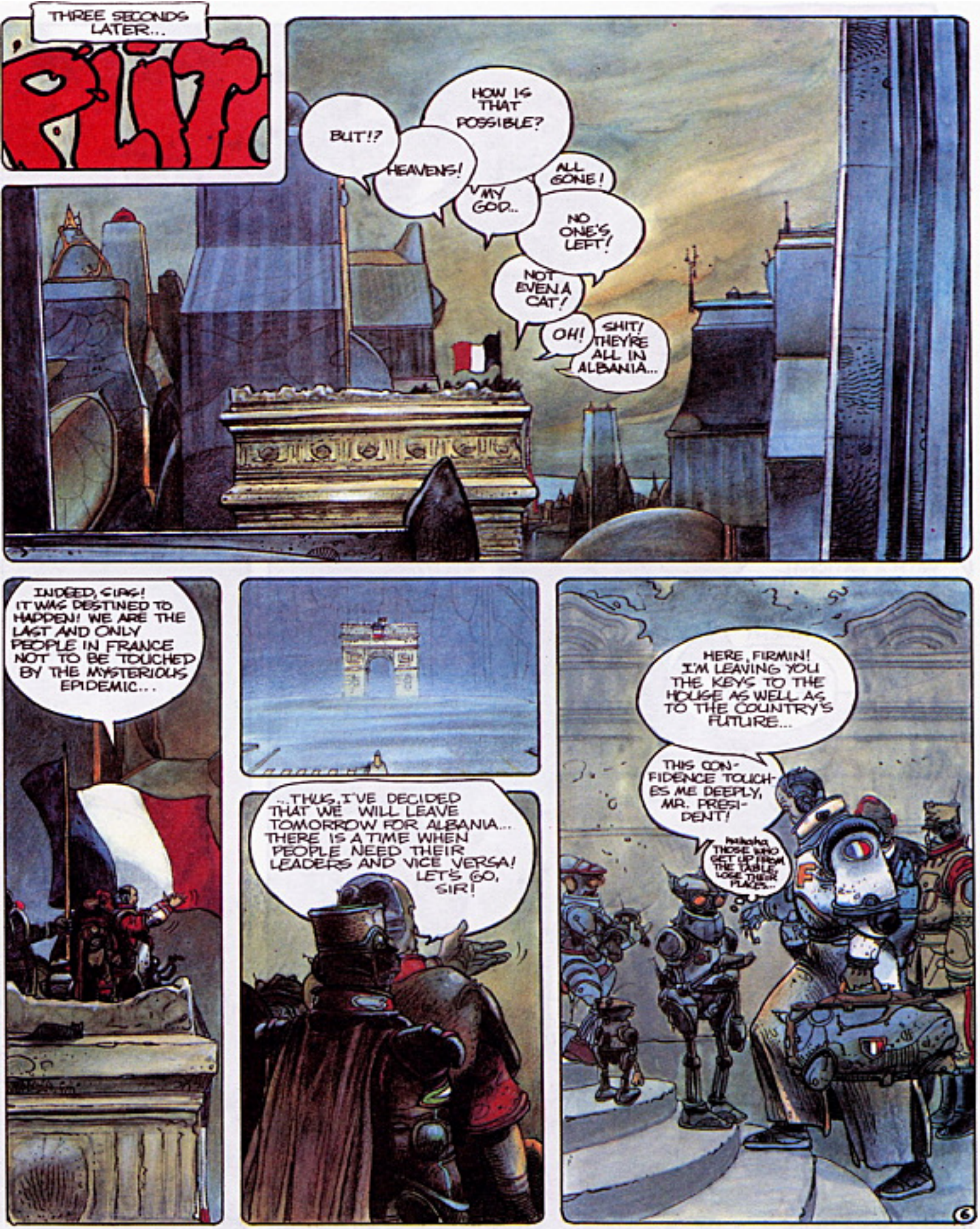
ABOVE A SUBURB OF PARIS...
LICE
WE'RE APPROACHING, MR. PRESIDENT... BY NOW, THE CHIEF OF SECURITY MUST BE THERE...
...WITH, LET'S HOPE, A RATIONAL EXPLANATION FOR THIS.
FIRMIN
FIRMIN, HOW IS YOUR WIFE FEELING AFTER THE BIRTH OF YOUR CHILD? WELL, I HOPE.
VERY WELL, MR. PRESIDENT... THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT... WE'RE ARRIVING, MR. PRESIDENT...
AH, HERE YOU ARE, MR. PRESIDENT!
WHAT HAS HAPPENED HERE?
IT'S UNIMAGINABLE, MR. PRESIDENT! IT GOES BEYOND ALL UNDERSTANDING! THE ENTIRE POPULATION OF GENNEVILLIERS HAS ACTUALLY DISAPPEARED!
INTO THIN AIR?
SO IT APPEARS...

YOU REALIZE, PRINCE, THAT WHAT YOU HAVE TOLD ME IS TOTALLY UNBELIEVABLE...
ALAS, MR. PRESIDENT... WE MUST YIELD TO THE EVIDENCE... MY MEN HAVE SEARCHED THE CITY FROM TOP TO BOTTOM...IN VAIN ...THEY FOUND NOT EVEN A CAT!
...NOT EVEN A CAT. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE IS THIS STRANGE THING THAT WALKS AROUND ABOVE THE GROUND, MAKING A "PLITCH" NOISE WHEN ONE TOUCHES IT!...
YES, "PLITCH"!
"PLITCH"?
VOTEZ A BABORD
PLITCH
?!?
INDEED...
AT ANY RATE, PLITCH OR NO PLITCH, HAS THIS ANY CONNECTION WITH THIS... COLLECTIVE DISAPPEARANCE...?
THANKS, FIRMIN!
IN MY OPINION, THERE IS NONE, MR. PRESIDENT... I THINK WE MUST LOOK TO THE OPPOSITION... DON'T FORGET THAT BY TRADITION, GENNEVILLIERS LEAN FAR TO THE LEFT, POLITICALLY!

INDEED? WHAT DO YOU THINK THE OPPOSITION WOULD DO WITH THE POPULATION THAT IS ALREADY THEIRS? YOU'RE DIGRESSING, MY DEAR PRINCE.
GLUB...
IN ANY CASE, THIS MATTER SEEMS GRAVE TO ME! WE MUST TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION! WE MUST CALL FOR A JOINT MEETING OF MINISTERS AND A TELEVISED STATEMENT. WE MUST GIVE A PUBLIC STATEMENT OUR FIRST PRIORITY! LET'S GO, MEN!
BUT WHAT EXACTLY SHOULD WE SAY, MISTER PRESIDENT?
A GOOD QUESTION!
WELL, WE CAN SAY THAT... LET'S THINK A LITTLE...
PLITCH
WE CAN SAY THAT THEY ARE VICTIMS OF AN EPIDEMIC — NOT SERIOUS — THAT THE POPULATION OF GENNEVILLIERS IS FOR THE MOMENT UNDERGOING TREATMENT IN AN ALBANIAN CLINIC!
?
?
BUT WHY AN ALBANIAN CLINIC, MR. PRESIDENT?
WHY NOT?
THAT'S STRANGE, DON'T YOU THINK? AN ALBANIAN CLINIC... ALBANIA — WHERE IS THAT, DO YOU KNOW?
IN CHINA OR SOMEPLACE LIKE THAT...
IN ANY CASE THEY MUST HAVE REALLY BUSY CLINICS THERE, HUH, PAPA? FULL OF GENNEVILLIERIAN PROLETARIATS!
INDEED... WHY DID I SAY THAT? STRANGE...
PLITCH

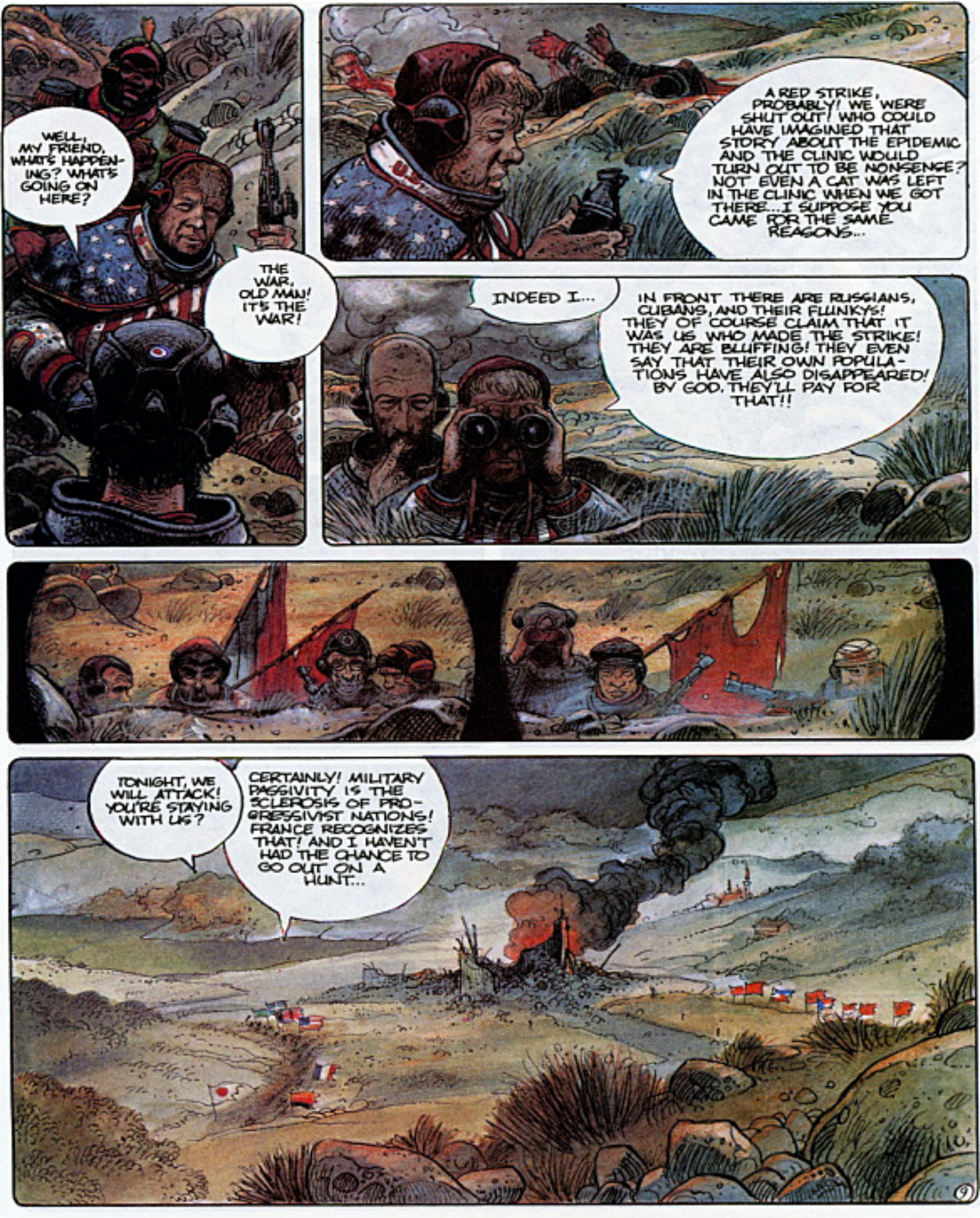
AND THAT SAME NIGHT...
PLiiiiiiiiTCHH
AT THE HOME OF THE PRESIDENT...
DRiiiiii?!NN
...YES...?
WHAT? LYON, BORDEAUX, MARSEILLE!!
FRENCHWOMEN, FRENCHMEN! DESPITE THE EVIL THAT HAS SWEPT DOWN THESE LAST 48 HOURS ON OUR COUNTRY AND IMMOBILIZED 23 MILLION OF OUR COMPATRIOTS IN AN ALBANIAN CLINIC, WE MUST NOT LOSE OUR NATIONAL COMPOSURE, NOR CAN WE FORGET THE DEEP PATRIOTIC ROOTS THAT HAVE FORGED IN EACH OF US THE CAPACITY FOR...
PLiTCH

EIGHT DAYS LATER...
DEAR PARISIAN FRIENDS! AS YOU UNDOUBTEDLY KNOW, THE REST OF THE FRENCH POPULATION IS NOW UNDERGOING TREATMENT IN AN ALBANIAN CLINIC... THE GOVERNMENT AND MYSELF WILL SOON BE IN A POSITION TO FURNISH YOU...
WITH A RATIONAL EXPLANATION TO THIS DELICATE PROBLEM! THE SITUATION IS GRAVE, BUT IT IS NOT HOPELESS AND THE GOVERNMENT IS FIRMLY...
MR. PRESIDENT! DOWN THERE! THE THING THAT GOES "PLITCH"!
ABZ
GARAGE
PLITCH
WELL, NEVER MIND THAT, PRINCE! FRANCE IS A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY, AND THIS "PLITCH" IS WELCOME...


THREE SECONDS LATER...
PLIP
BUT!?
HEAVENS!
HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?
MY GOD..
ALL GONE!
NO ONE'S LEFT!
NOT EVEN A CAT!
OH!
SHIT! THEY'RE ALL IN ALBANIA...
INDEED, SIRE! IT WAS DESTINED TO HAPPEN! WE ARE THE LAST AND ONLY PEOPLE IN FRANCE NOT TO BE TOUCHED BY THE MYSTERIOUS EPIDEMIC...
...THUS, I'VE DECIDED THAT WE WILL LEAVE TOMORROW FOR ALBANIA... THERE IS A TIME WHEN PEOPLE NEED THEIR LEADERS AND VICE VERSA! LET'S GO, SIR!
HERE, FIRMIN! I'M LEAVING YOU THE KEYS TO THE HOUSE AS WELL AS TO THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE...
THIS CONFIDENCE TOUCHES ME DEEPLY, MR. PRESIDENT!
hihaha, THOSE WHO GET UP FROM THE TABLE LOSE THEIR PLACES...
6

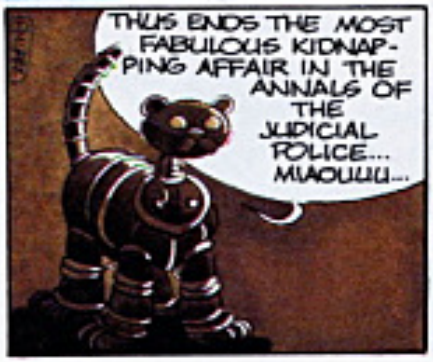
THIS EPIDEMIC IS QUITE PROVIDENTIAL! IT KEEPS US FROM RUNNING ALL THE RISKS OF A CLASSIC COUP D'ETAT, WHICH IS ALWAYS HAZARDOUS! AT LAST WE ARE THE MASTERS OF THE COUNTRY! THIS AFTERNOON WE MUST HAVE A MEETING OF ALL AVAILABLE ROBOTS! I'M FORMING A NEW GOVERNMENT!
ha
ha ha
BUT THIS IS A COUNTRY AS EMPTY AS IT IS SILENT. A PALE SUN PAINFULLY RISES, SOON FOLLOWED BY A GIGANTIC PLITCH
COURAGE, MEN! COURAGE!
VIVE LA FRANCE!
WE'VE REACHED ITALY!
THE MOONLIGHT IS SPLENDID...
WE'VE ARRIVED IN YUGOSLAVIA, MR. PRESIDENT, AND WE STILL HAVEN'T SEEN A SOUL! NOT EVEN A CAT! ISN'T THAT STRANGE?
STRANGE, YES... LIKE MANY THINGS IN THIS SITUATION...
WE'RE STARTING TO HAVE HEAVY LOSSES, MR. PRESIDENT... ALREADY THREE MINISTERS ARE DEAD FROM EXHAUSTION, AND ONE WHO WAS IN THE WAR...
WE'RE ARRIVING GENERAL. WE'RE ARRIVING!
OOH!

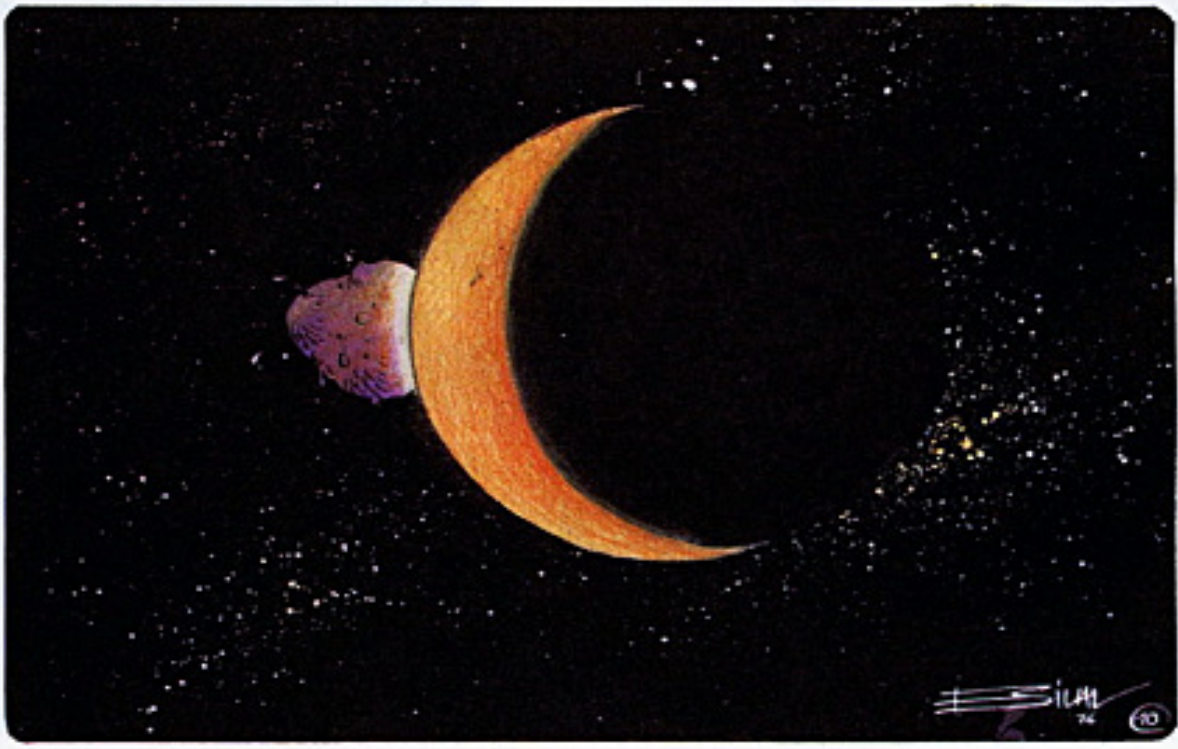
INDEED, THREE WEEKS LATER...
THERE! OVER THERE! THE CLINIC!
WHAT CAN I SAY?
UFFF... I'M... DYING!
BRAOUM
TAC TAC TAC TAC TAC
BANG
BANG
AAAAH
SCHBLAM
THINGS SEEM TO BE RATHER BAD HERE... WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST, GENERAL?
WE MUST GO SEE WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, MR. PRESIDENT, IT'S OUR DUTY...
HEY! DON'T ADVANCE THERE, I'VE JUST MINED THE TERRAIN!
HERE ARE REINFORCEMENTS, MEN! THE FRENCH ARE WITH US!


WELL, MY FRIEND, WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
THE WAR, OLD MAN! IT'S THE WAR!
A RED STRIKE, PROBABLY! WE WERE SHUT OUT! WHO COULD HAVE IMAGINED THAT STORY ABOUT THE EPIDEMIC AND THE CLINIC WOULD TURN OUT TO BE NONSENSE? NOT EVEN A CAT WAS LEFT IN THE CLINIC WHEN WE GOT THERE... I SUPPOSE YOU CAME FOR THE SAME REASONS...
INDEED I...
IN FRONT THERE ARE RUSSIANS, CUBANS, AND THEIR FLUNKYS! THEY OF COURSE CLAIM THAT IT WAS US WHO MADE THE STRIKE! THEY ARE BLUFFING! THEY EVEN SAY THAT THEIR OWN POPULATIONS HAVE ALSO DISAPPEARED! BY GOD, THEY'LL PAY FOR THAT!!
TONIGHT, WE WILL ATTACK! YOU'RE STAYING WITH US?
CERTAINLY! MILITARY PASSIVITY IS THE SCLEROSIS OF PROGRESSIVIST NATIONS! FRANCE RECOGNIZES THAT! AND I HAVEN'T HAD THE CHANCE TO GO OUT ON A HUNT...
9

IT WAS A GLORIOUS EVENING!

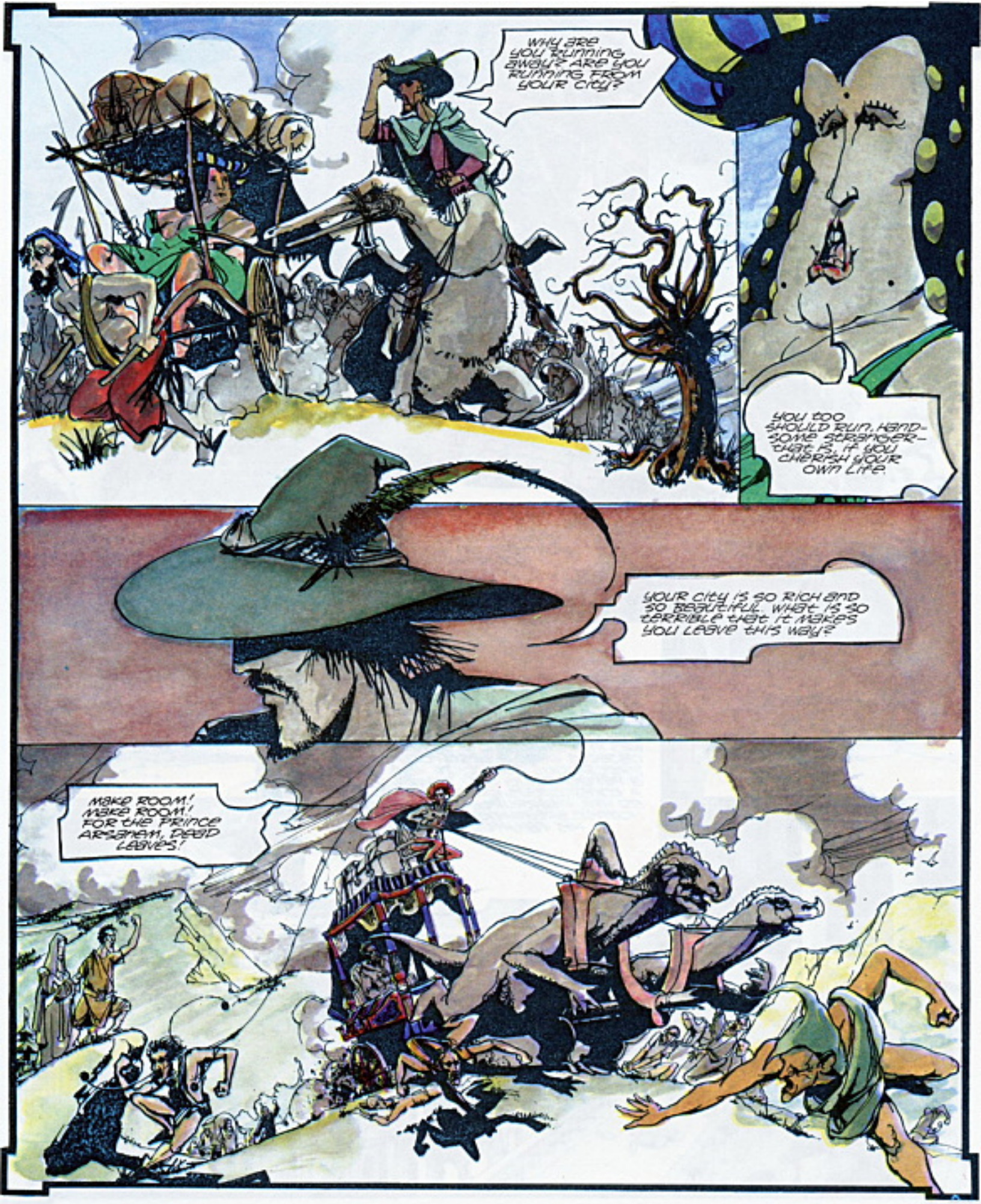
THERE NO LONGER REMAINS EVEN A CAT ON EARTH AND, AS IN FRANCE, ROBOTS ARE TAKING OVER THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. A GIGANTIC PLITCH HAS TAKEN ITS PRECIOUS HUMAN CARGO, FRUIT OF HIS EXTRAORDINARILY AUDACIOUS STRIKE, ON AN EPOCHAL JOURNEY THROUGH SPACE...

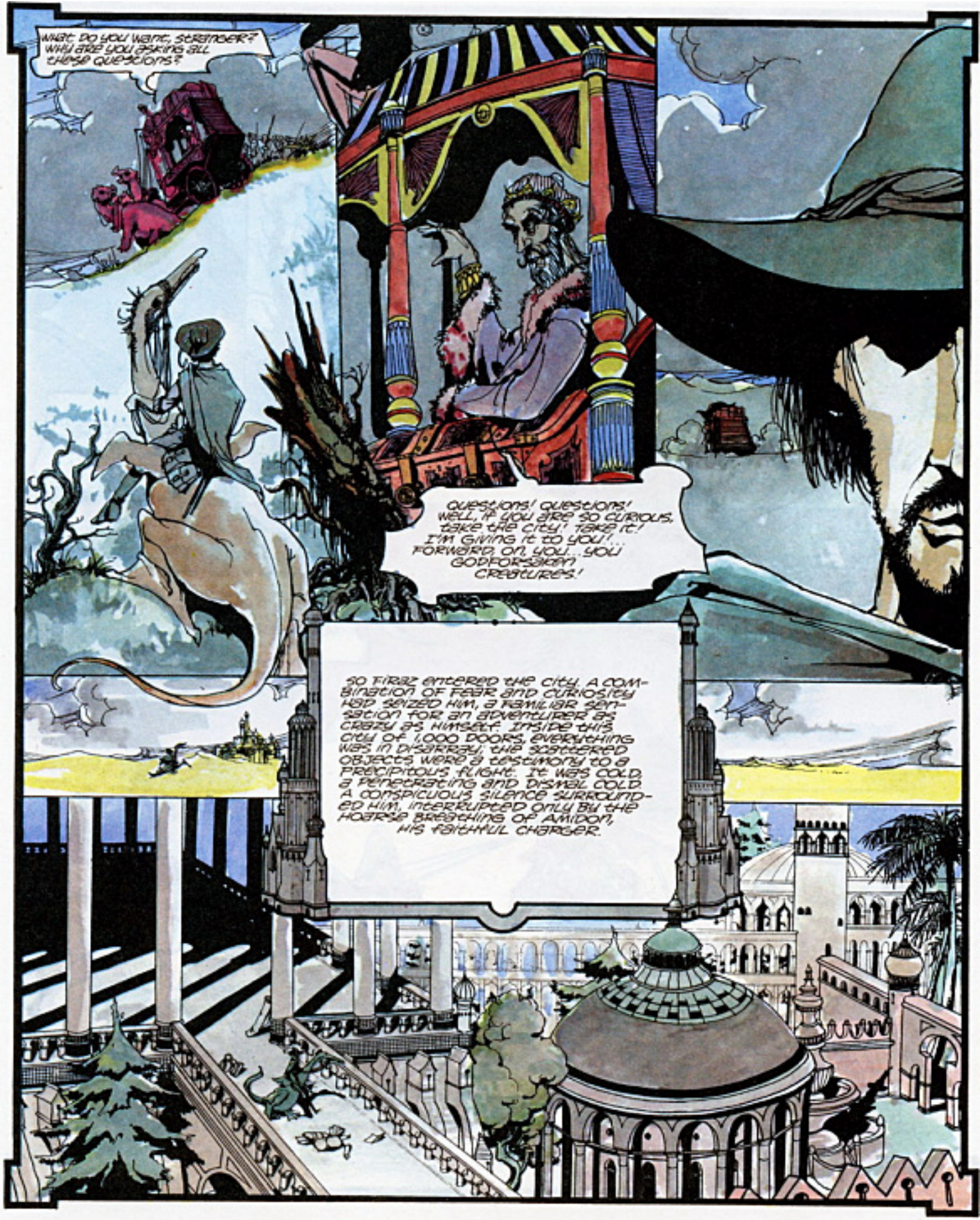


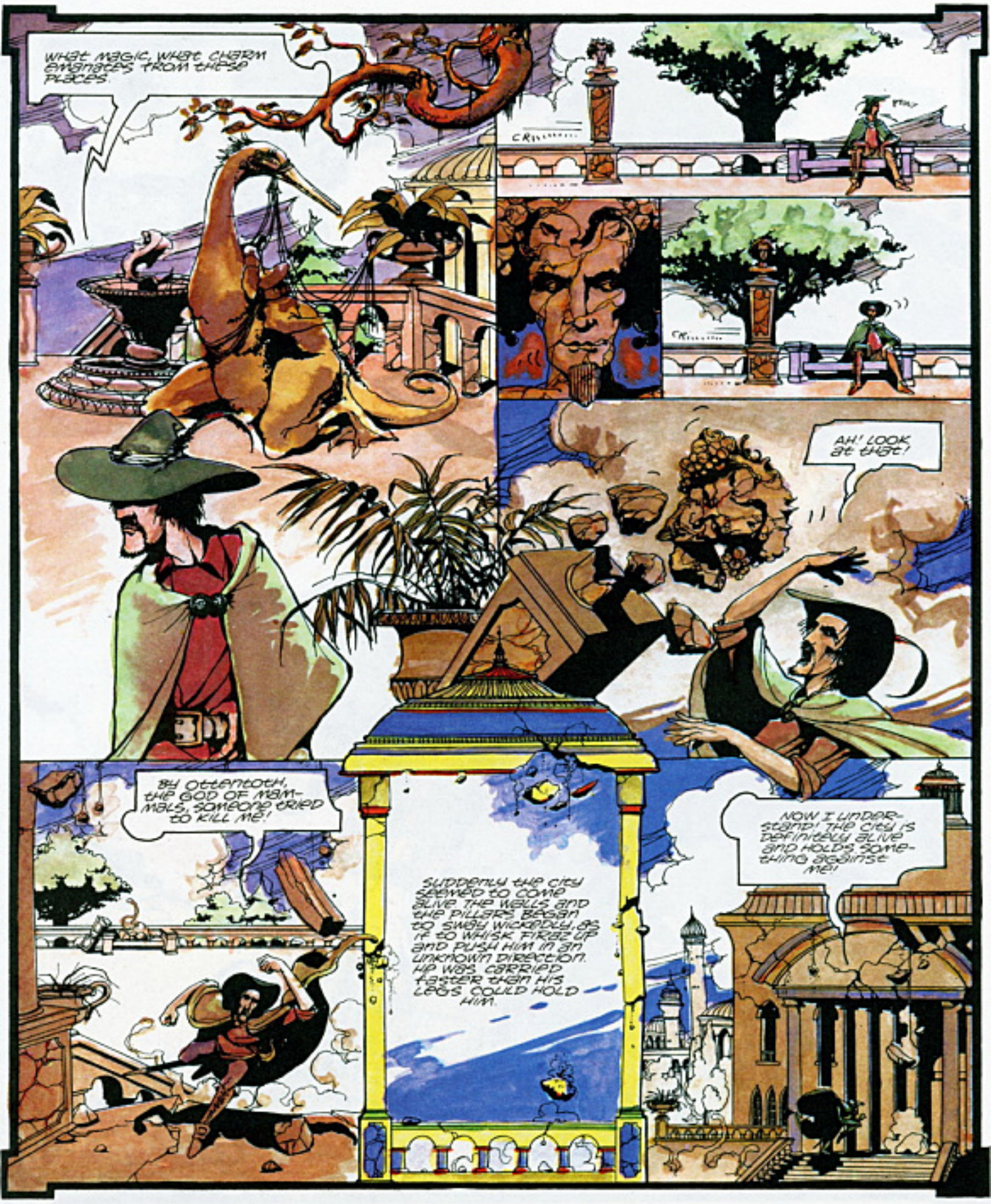


STORY BY DRULLET
ART BY MR. RICOTTO
FIRAZ
FIRAZ LIVED IN A TIME WHEN THE WORLD HAD NO NAME. HE WAS A LIVING REMINDER OF THE LOWER QUARTERS OF THE RED CITY, WHICH BORDERS ON THE GREAT SEA. FIRAZ, FILTHY AND STARVING, TRAVELED A LONG TIME IN THE FOREST OF THE BLACK PILLARS, AND EVENTUALLY SIGHTED A CITY UNFAMILIAR TO HIM. IT WAS ARSANEM, ONE OF THE MANY CITIES POPULATING THE ORIENTAL WORLD.

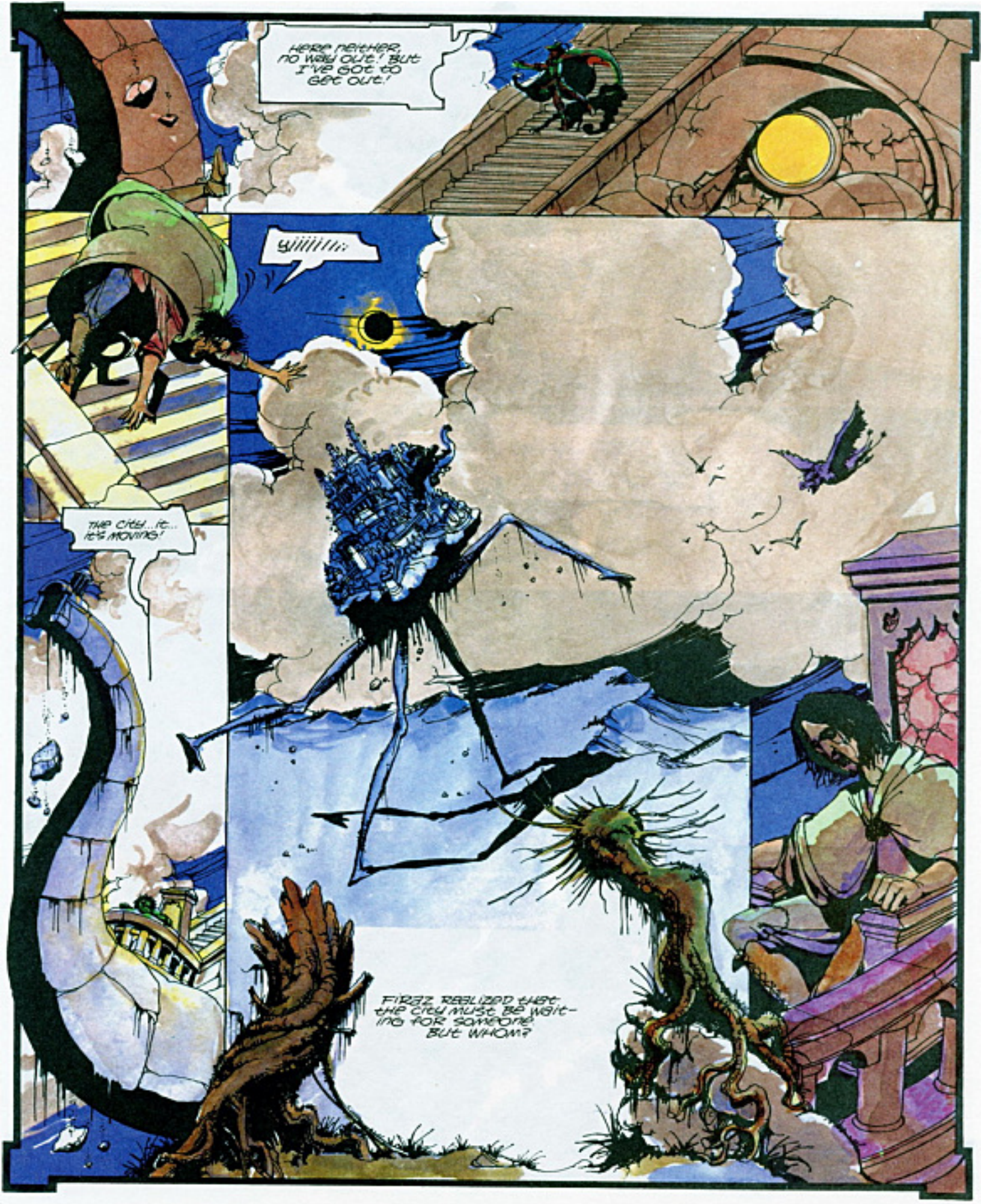
But as he stood and gazed at this beautiful city, he noticed its inhabitants were dispersing in small groups out into the countryside.


WHY ARE YOU RUNNING AWAY? ARE YOU RUNNING FROM YOUR CITY?
YOU TOO SHOULD RUN, HANDSOME STRANGER— THAT IS, IF YOU CHERISH YOUR OWN LIFE.
YOUR CITY IS SO RICH AND SO BEAUTIFUL. WHAT IS SO TERRIBLE THAT IT MAKES YOU LEAVE THIS WAY?
MAKE ROOM! MAKE ROOM! FOR THE PRINCE ARSENIUM, DEEDLEAVES!

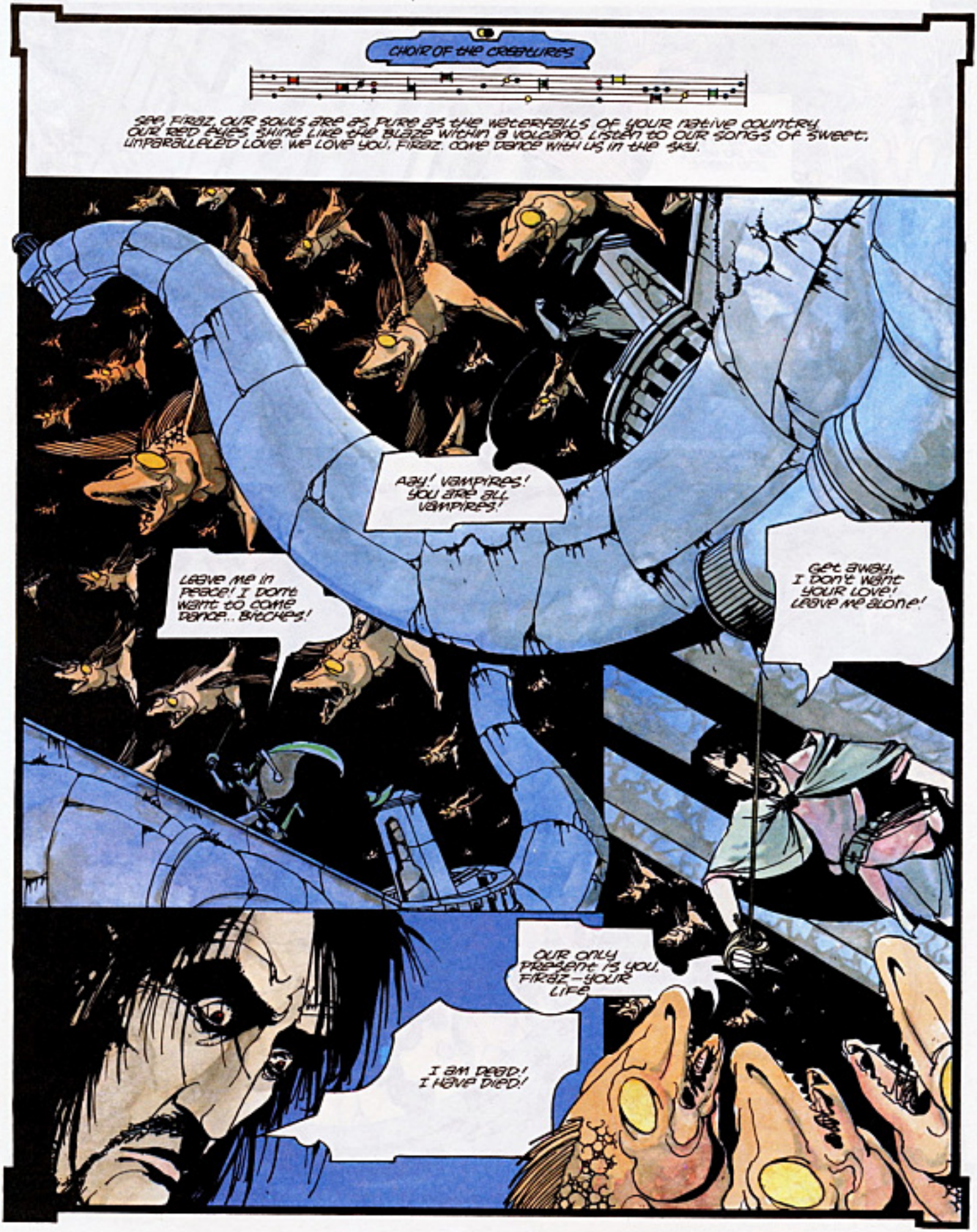

WHAT DO YOU WANT, STRANGER? WHY ARE YOU ASKING ALL THESE QUESTIONS?
QUESTIONS! QUESTIONS! WELL, IF YOU ARE SO CURIOUS, TAKE THE CITY! TAKE IT! I'M GIVING IT TO YOU!... FORWARD, ON, YOU... YOU GODFORSAKEN CREATURES!
SO TIRRZ ENTERED THE CITY. A COMBINATION OF FEAR AND CURIOSITY HAD SEIZED HIM, A FAMILIAR SENSATION FOR AN ADVENTURER AS CRAZY AS HIMSELF. INSIDE THIS CITY OF 1,000 DOORS, EVERYTHING WAS IN DISARRAY; THE SCATTERED OBJECTS WERE A TESTIMONY TO A PRECIPITOUS FLIGHT. IT WAS COLD, A PENETRATING AND DISMAL COLD. A CONSPICUOUS SILENCE SURROUNDED HIM, INTERRUPTED ONLY BY THE HOARSE BREATHING OF AMIDON, HIS FAITHFUL CHARGER.

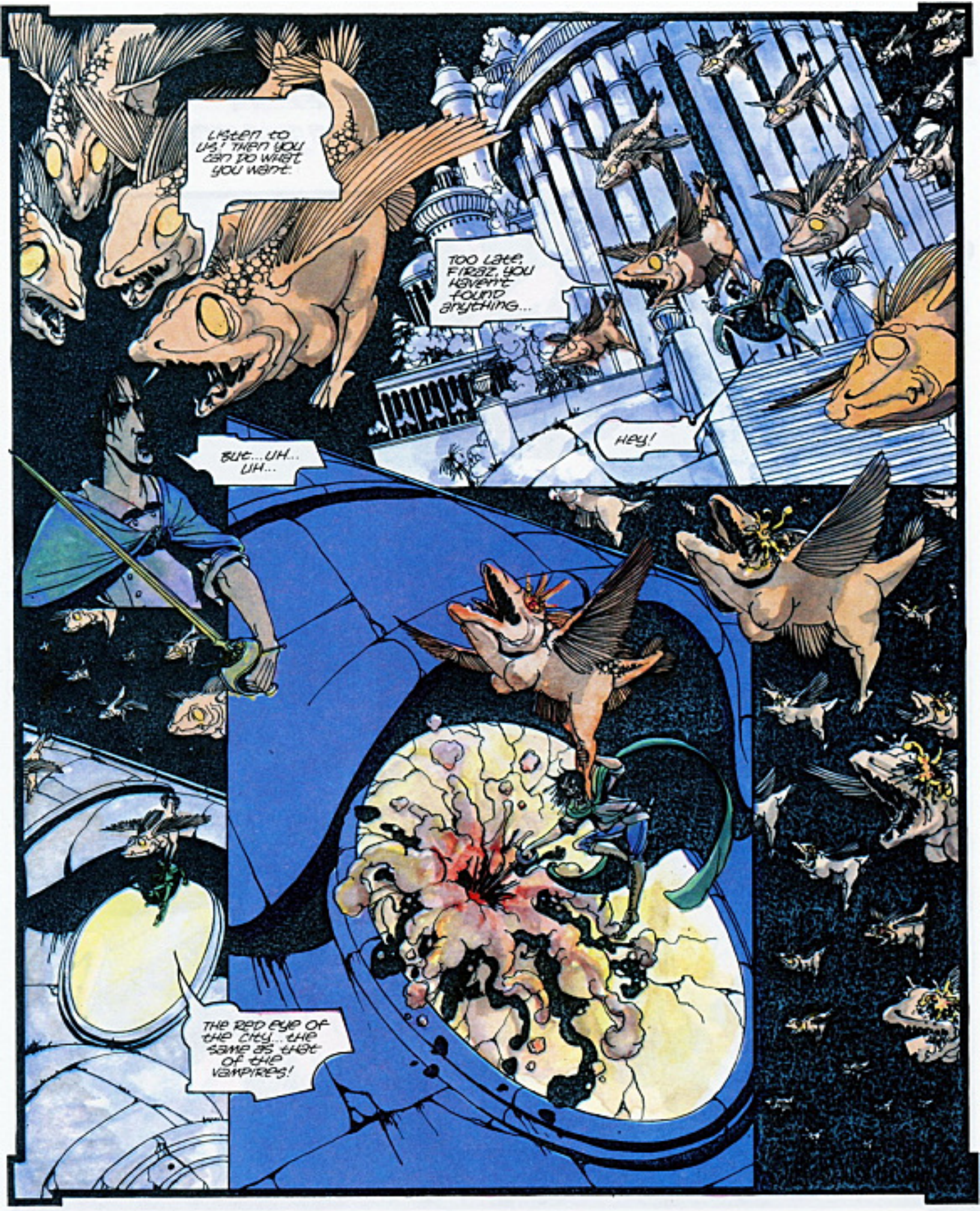

WHAT MAGIC, WHAT CHARM EMANATES FROM THESE PLACES.
AH! LOOK at that!
BY OTTENTOTH, THE GOD OF MAMMALS, SOMEONE TRIED TO KILL ME!
SUDDENLY THE CITY SEEMED TO COME ALIVE. THE WALLS AND THE PILLARS BEGAN TO SWAY WICKEDLY, AS IF TO WHISK FIRBZ UP AND PUSH HIM IN AN UNKNOWN DIRECTION. HE WAS CARRIED FASTER THAN HIS LEGS COULD HOLD HIM.
NOW I UNDERSTAND! THE CITY IS DEFINITELY ALIVE AND HOLDS SOMETHING AGAINST ME!

CRAZED TERRORS AND BLACK BLOOD HAUNT ME
FIRAZ CURSED HIMSELF FOR HIS INSATIABLE CURIOSITY, WHICH HAD THROWN HIM INTO THIS MONSTEROUS CITY. HIS BITTER REGRETS WERE OF NO HELP TO HIM NOW, SO FIRAZ RAN AND RAN...
NO EXIT!

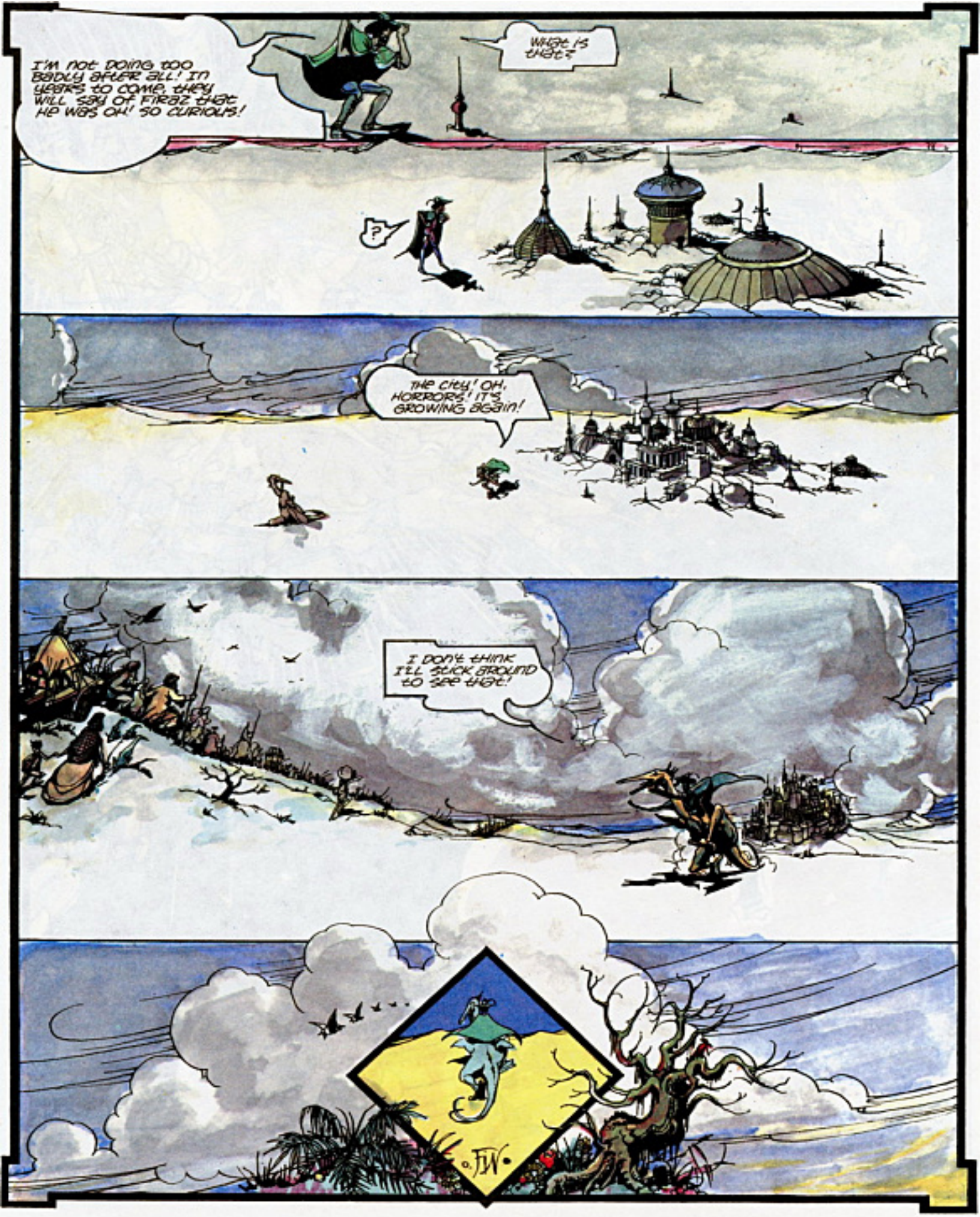

HERE NEITHER. NO WAY OUT! BUT I'VE GOT TO GET OUT!
YIIIIIIII!
THE CITY... IT... IT'S MOVING!
FIRST REALIZED THAT THE CITY MUST BE WAITING FOR SOMEONE! BUT WHOM?

FIRAZ TREMBLED WITH FEAR, HANGING ON TO THE ELEPHANT'S STONE.
FIRAZ STOOD AND STARED IN WONDERMENT AS THE WHOLE CITY BEHIND HIM BLEW IN THE NIGHT WIND...
BY GOD, IT IS FLYING AWAY. THE CITY IS FLYING AWAY. OH MY GOD- I CURSE YOU!
I, A BAGGAR FROM THE LOWER QUARTERS OF THE RED CITY. HERE I AM FLYING INTO THE STARS.
COME WITH US, CHILD OF THE BLACK EARTH!
COME ALONG WITH US!
OH, JOY. THE ONE WE'VE WAITED FOR IS COMING TO US BY WAY OF THE CITY.


CHOIR OF THE CREATURES
See, Firaz, our souls are as pure as the waterfalls of your native country. Our red eyes shine like the blaze within a volcano. Listen to our songs of sweet, unparalleled love. We love you, Firaz. Come dance with us in the sky.
Aah! Vampires! You are all vampires!
Leave me in peace! I don't want to come dance... Bitches!
Get away, I don't want your love! Leave me alone!
Our only present is you, Firaz - your life.
I am dead! I have died!


LISTEN TO US! THEN YOU CAN DO WHAT YOU WANT.
TOO LATE, FREAK, YOU HAVEN'T FOUND ANYTHING...
HEY!
BUT... UH... UH...
THE RED EYE OF THE CITY... THE SAME AS THAT OF THE VAMPIRES!

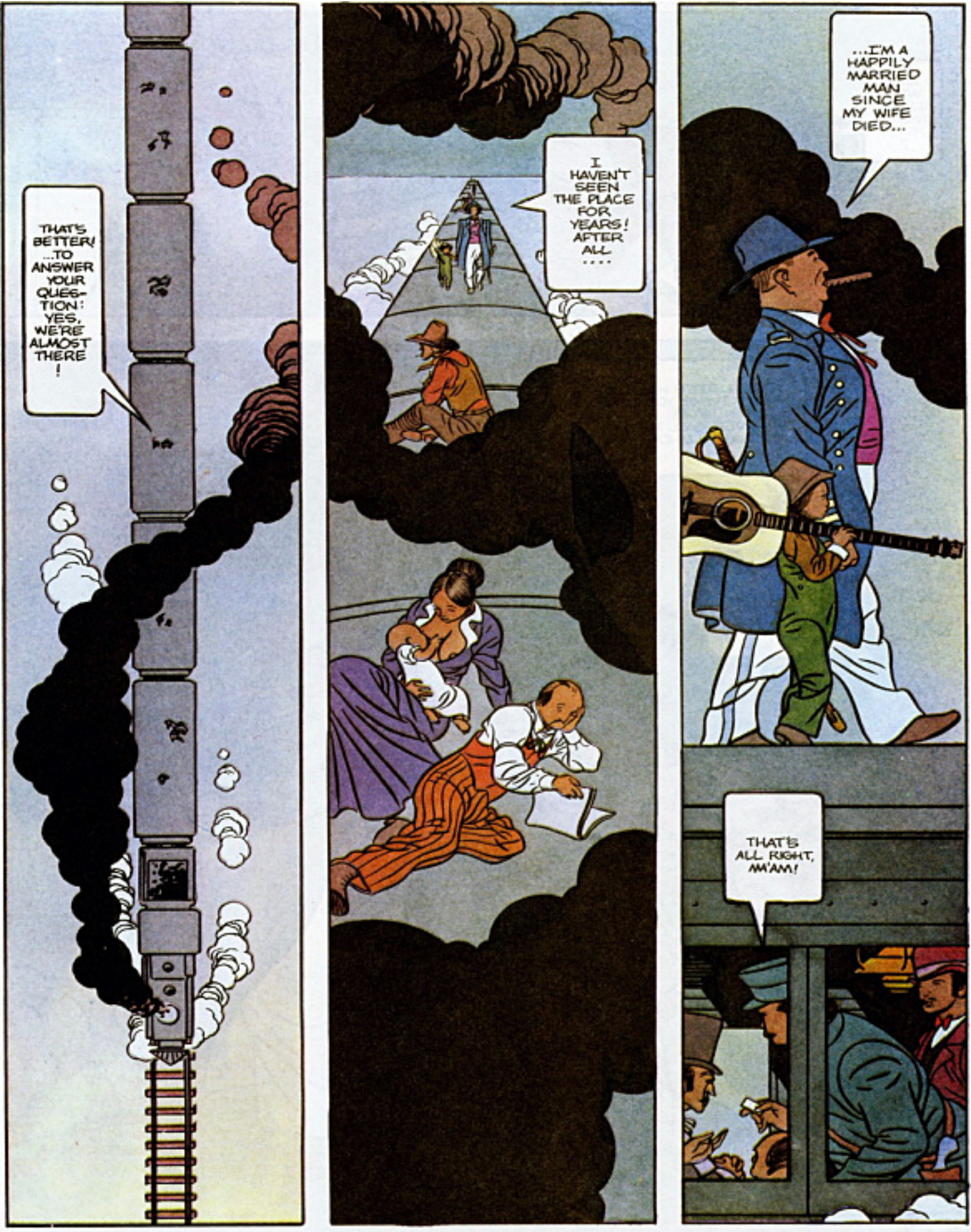
I SAW IT! SO CLEARLY!


I'M NOT DOING TOO BADLY AFTER ALL! IN YEARS TO COME, THEY WILL SAY OF FIRAZ THAT HE WAS OH! SO CURIOUS!
WHAT IS THAT?
?
THE CITY! OH, HORRORS! IT'S GROWING AGAIN!
I DON'T THINK I'LL STICK AROUND TO SEE THAT!
FW

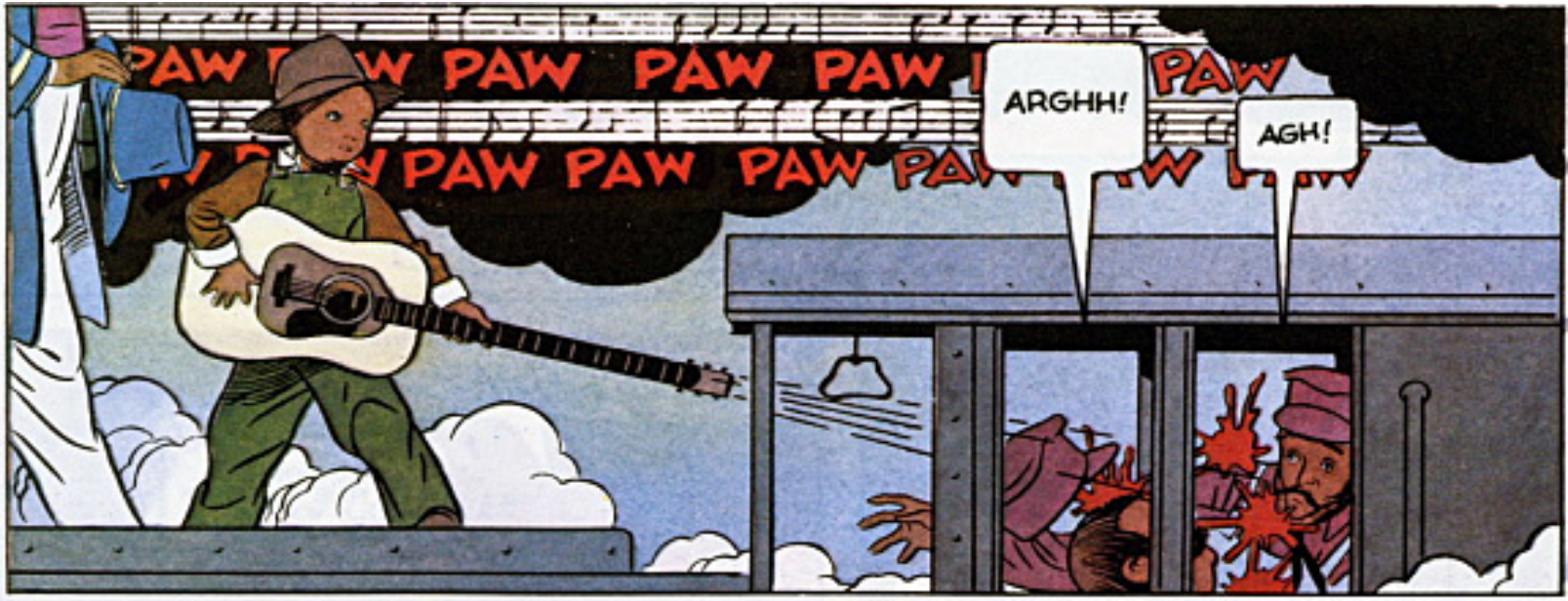
heartbreak hotel

by Dick Matena

ARE WE ALMOST THERE, SIR?
NOW LISTEN HERE, BOY! FIRST THING YOU HAVE TO LEARN IS: BE POLITE! SO NEVER CALL ME 'SIR' AGAIN! UNDERSTOOD?
YESSIR, MISTER COLONEL!


THAT'S BETTER! ...TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION: YES, WE'RE ALMOST THERE!
I HAVEN'T SEEN THE PLACE FOR YEARS! AFTER ALL....
...I'M A HAPPILY MARRIED MAN SINCE MY WIFE DIED...
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, MA'AM!

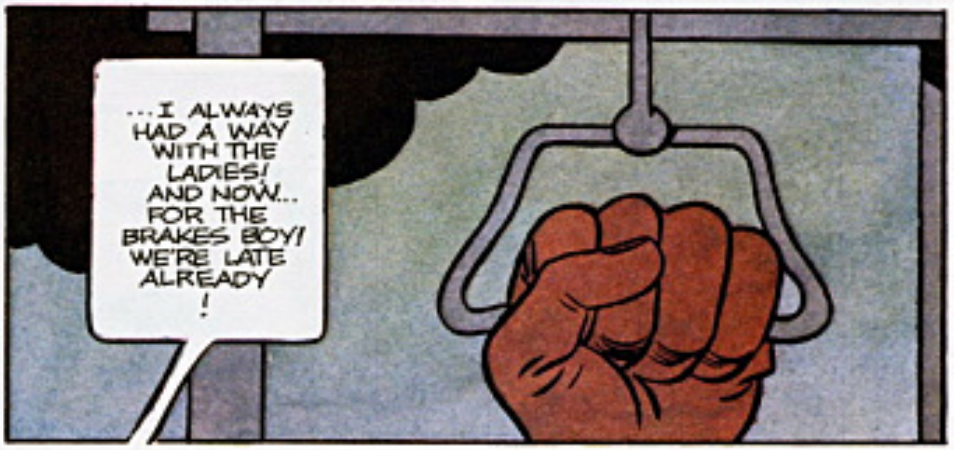
THEY CALL THIS DESERT 'LONELY STREET'! IF EVER A PLACE DESERVED ITS NAME!...
...THERE IT IS! AT THE END OF 'LONELY STREET': HEARTBREAK HOTEL!
LOOKS LIKE A PRISON!
IT IS SONNY!... TO THE SAD AND THE DESERTED...
...GOOD MORNING MY FINE FELLOWS! WOULD YOU MIND STOPPING HERE AND LET US OFF?
STOP HERE? IN 'LONELY STREET'? YOU MUST BE NUTS!
SIGH!... ALWAYS THE SAME! OKAY BOY, GO AHEAD! SHOW'M!
GLADLY, SIR MISTER COLONEL!
DON'T PAY NO ATTENTION! THEY MAY BE DANGEROUS!

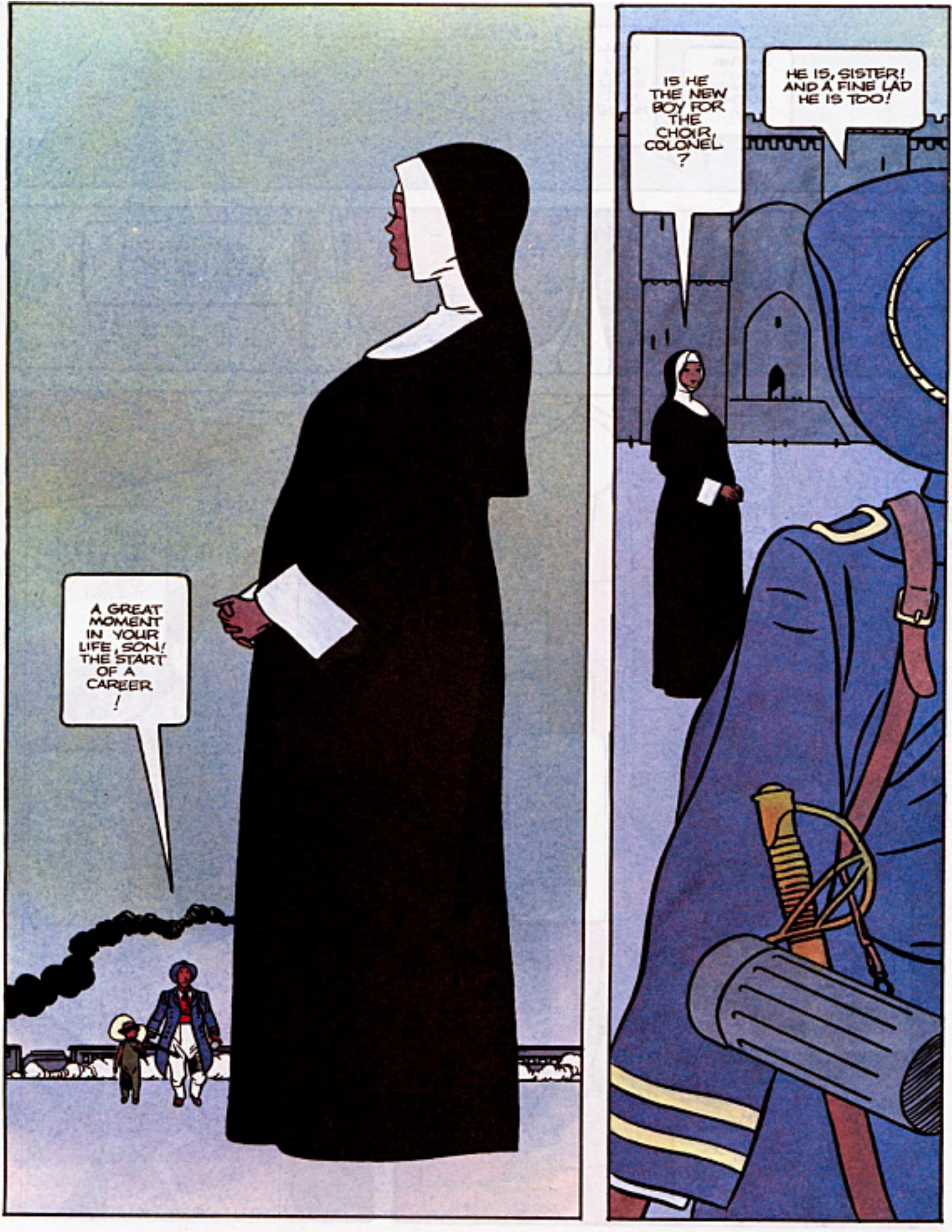

PAW PAW PAW PAW PAW
PAW PAW PAW PAW
ARGHH!
AGH!

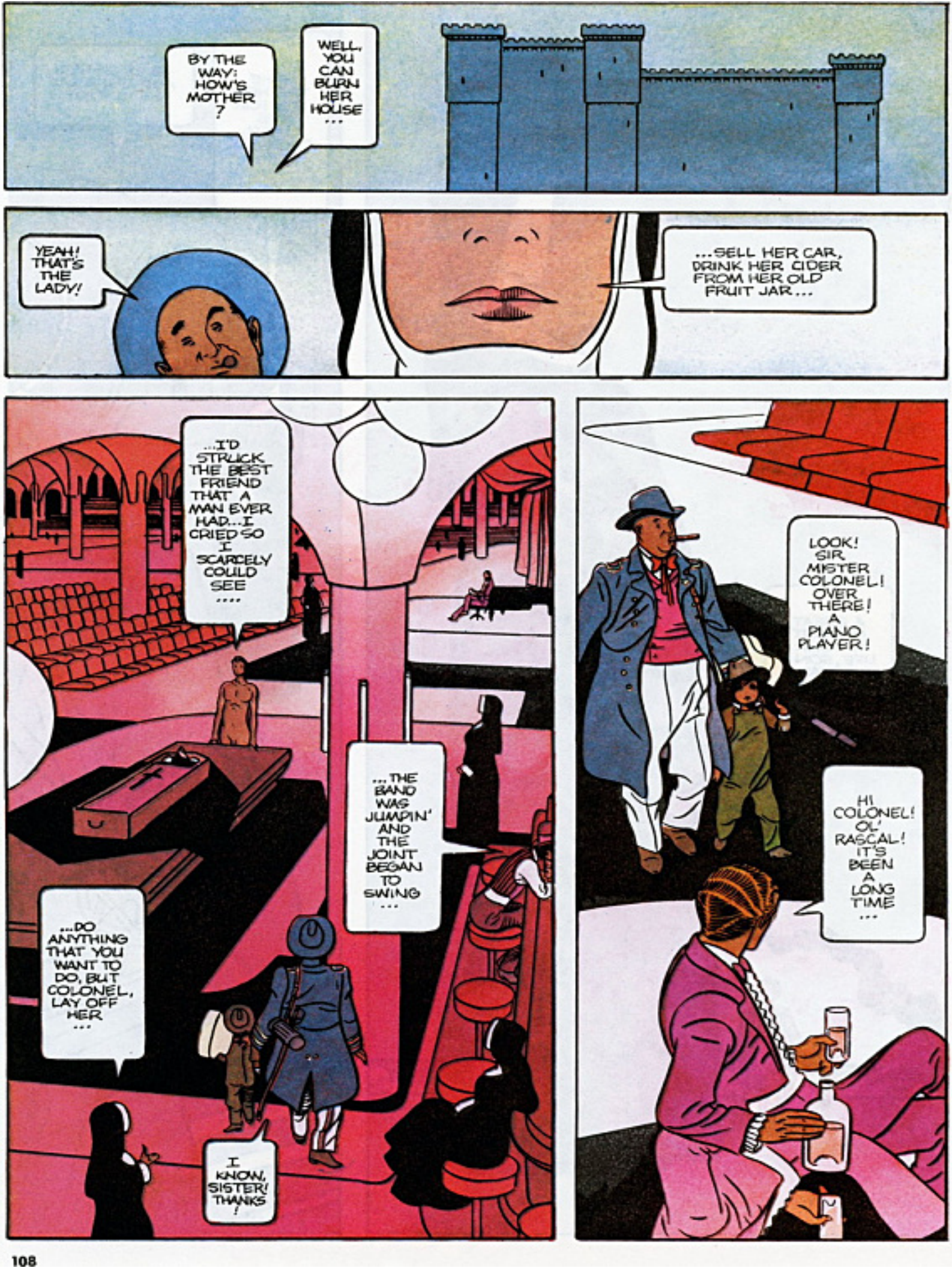
IN THE HANDS OF THE TALENTED A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT IS LIKE A WEAPON !
DON'T TELL ME, SIR! I'M A MUSICIAN MYSELF !

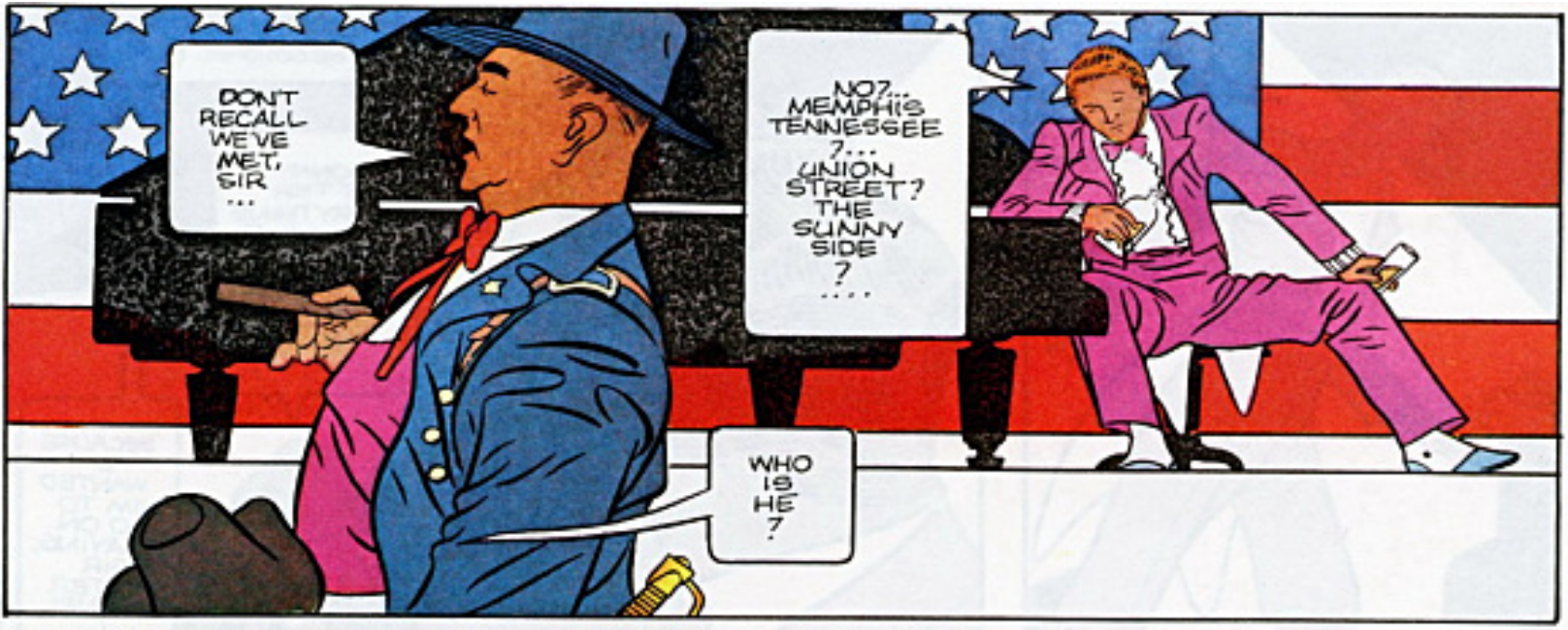
...IN MY SPARE TIME, OF COURSE! OH, IF ONLY I HAD KNOWN ...
IF ONLY, INDEED!

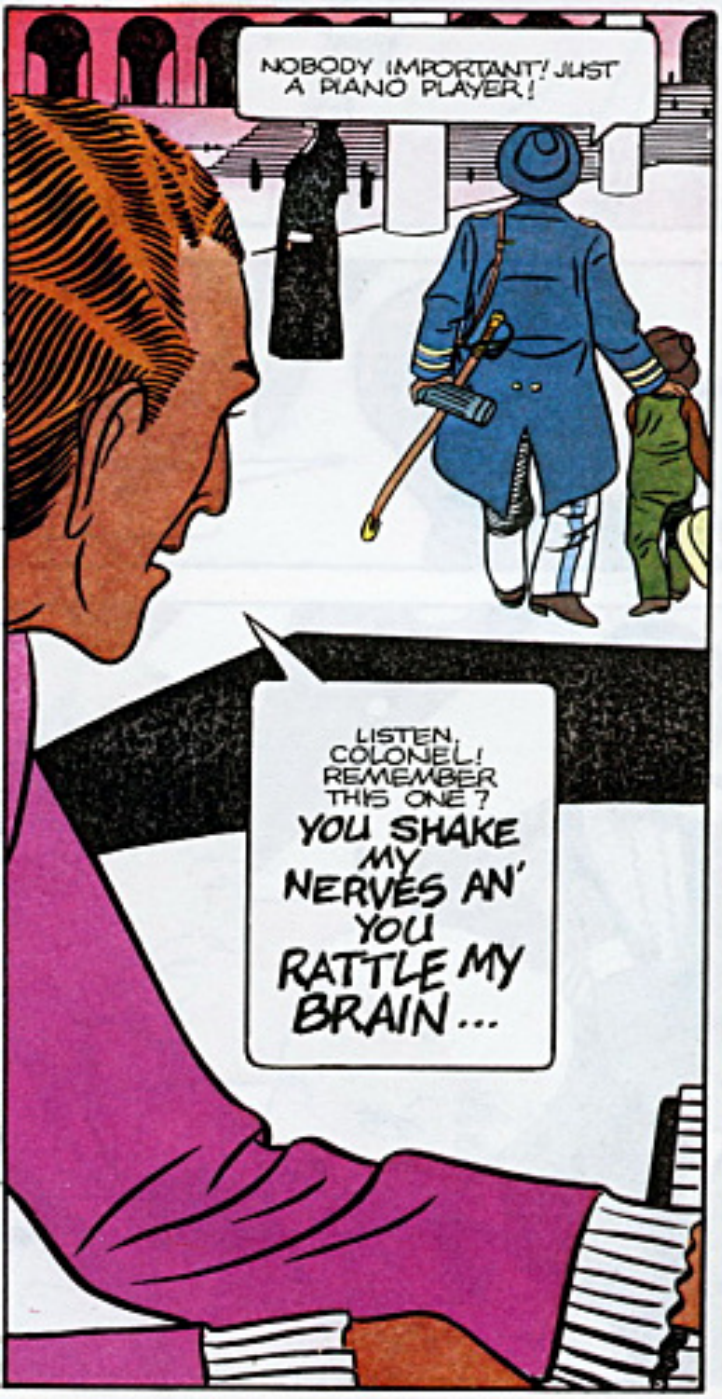
...WHAT A WONDERFUL WAY TO GO... W-WISH I'D LIVE T-TO TELL THE ...THE MISSUS...
DON'T WORRY! I'LL TAKE CARE OF THAT, MY GOOD MAN !


...I ALWAYS HAD A WAY WITH THE LADIES! AND NOW... FOR THE BRAKES BOY! WE'RE LATE ALREADY !


A GREAT MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE, SON! THE START OF A CAREER!
IS HE THE NEW BOY FOR THE CHOIR, COLONEL?
HE IS, SISTER! AND A FINE LAD HE IS TOO!


BY THE WAY: HOW'S MOTHER ?
WELL, YOU CAN BURN HER HOUSE ...
YEAH! THAT'S THE LADY!
...SELL HER CAR, DRINK HER CIDER FROM HER OLD FRUIT JAR...
...I'D STRUCK THE BEST FRIEND THAT A MAN EVER HAD...I CRIED SO I SCARCELY COULD SEE ....
...THE BAND WAS JUMPIN' AND THE JOINT BEGAN TO SWING ...
...DO ANYTHING THAT YOU WANT TO DO, BUT COLONEL, LAY OFF HER ...
I KNOW, SISTER! THANKS !
LOOK! SIR MISTER COLONEL! OVER THERE! A PIANO PLAYER!
HI COLONEL! OL' RASCAL! IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME ...


DON'T RECALL WE'VE MET, SIR ...
NO?... MEMPHIS TENNESSEE ?... UNION STREET? THE SUNNY SIDE ? ....
WHO IS HE ?

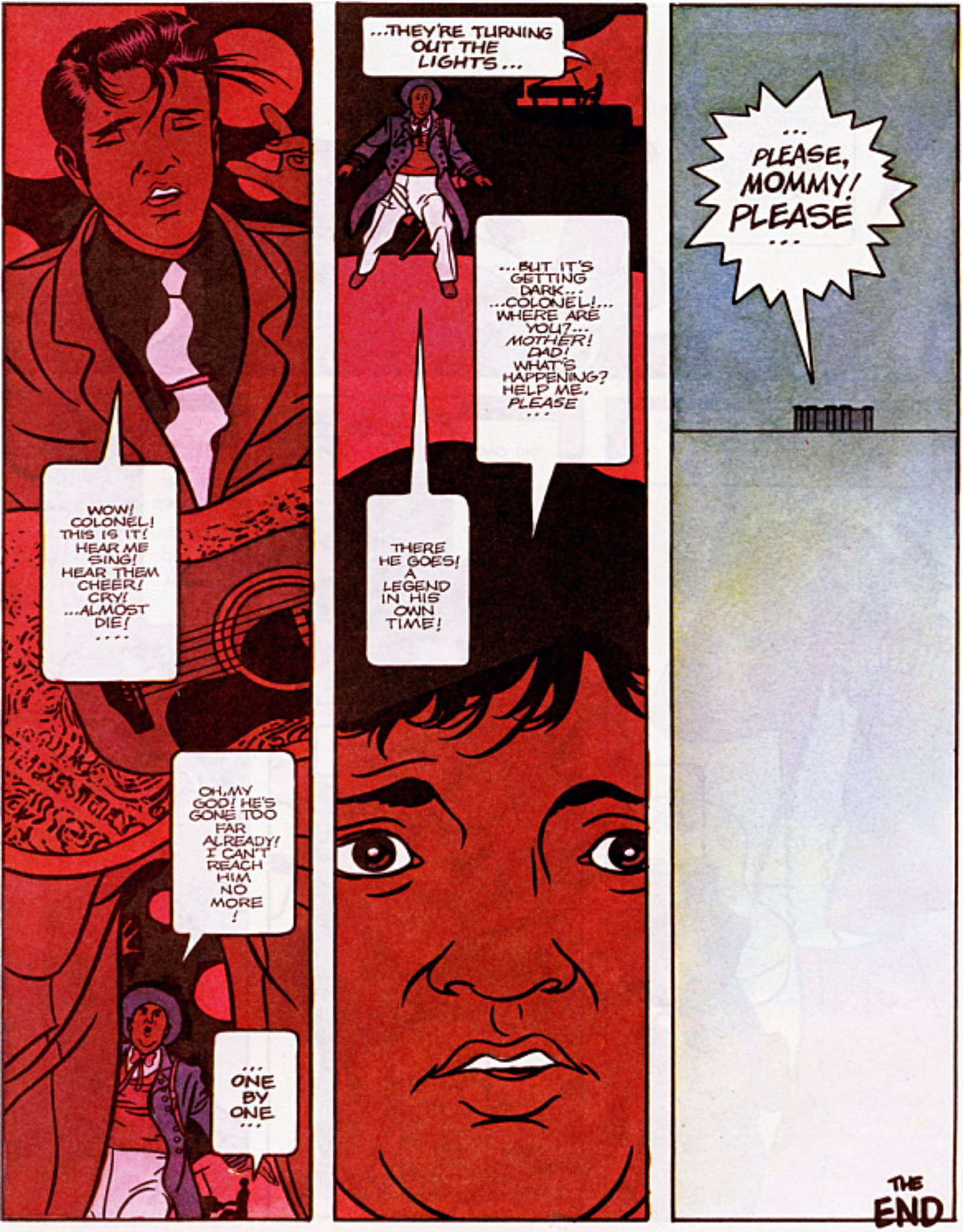

NOBODY IMPORTANT! JUST A PIANO PLAYER!
LISTEN, COLONEL! REMEMBER THIS ONE? YOU SHAKE MY NERVES AN' YOU RATTLE MY BRAIN...

...TOO MUCH O' LOVE DRIVES A MAN INSANE ...
WHY DO YOU CRY?
SOB! IT'S THAT MUSIC... SOB! ...MAKES ME FEEL HOMESICK ... SOB!

DOES IT NOW, HUH? ptui!

WHO THE HELL DID THAT?
THE COLONEL DID!
SONNY! AFTER EVERYTHING I'VE DONE FOR YOU, YOU'RE BETRAYING ME! WHY?
BECAUSE I WANTED HIM TO GO ON PLAYING, SIR MISTER COLONEL!
HEAR THAT, YOU FAT SON OF A BITCH! THE KID WANTED ME TO GO ON PLAYING!
SIR! MIND YOUR MANNERS! THE BOY IS WATCHIN' US!
GOOD! I'LL GIVE HIM A BIT MORE TO WATCH! TAKE THAT!

THE HYPOCRITE! ALWAYS BRINGING IN YOUNG TALENTED BOYS FOR THE CHOIR! AND THEN...RECORDS ...RADIO... AND TELEVISION! MOVIES !
THAT SOUNDS GREAT!
IT IS, BOY!...IF YOU CAN STAND IT! ONCE, I MYSELF WAS A L'IL BOY IN THE CHOIR! BUT I DIDN'T GO ALL THE WAY...
WHICH WAY, SIR?
THE ONE OVER THERE, KID! BUT BE WARNED...
...WARNED, SIR?...
EVERY STEP YOU TAKE IS A YEAR IN YOUR LIFE!
I NEVER HAD THE NERVE ... BESIDES I LOVE MY MUSIC TOO MUCH !
NO! STOP! HO! STAY HERE !


WOW! COLONEL! THIS IS IT! HEAR ME SING! HEAR THEM CHEER! CRY! ...ALMOST DIE! ....
OH, MY GOD! HE'S GONE TOO FAR ALREADY! I CAN'T REACH HIM NO MORE!
... ONE BY ONE ...
...THEY'RE TURNING OUT THE LIGHTS...
...BUT IT'S GETTING DARK... ...COLONEL!... WHERE ARE YOU?... MOTHER! DAD! WHAT'S HAPPENING? HELP ME, PLEASE ...
THERE HE GOES! A LEGEND IN HIS OWN TIME!
... PLEASE, MOMMY! PLEASE ...
THE END

Hé
Bilal
Moebius
Paul Kirchner
Richard Corben
The Schuiten Brothers
Thomas Warkentin/Dan O'Bannon
Picotto / Druillet
Walt Simonson
Dick Matena
Harry North
Claveloux
Voss
Caza